



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**THERMONUCLEAR PROPAGANDA: PRESENTATIONS  
OF NUCLEAR STRATEGY IN THE EARLY ATOMIC  
AGE**

by

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June 2014

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STRATEGY IN THE EARLY ATOMIC AGE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

As the image of the thermonuclear apocalypse loomed over the early years of the Cold War and technological advancements brought the possibility of such a fate closer to reality, the U.S.-Soviet conflict became increasingly a battle for hearts and minds—on the home front as well as among allied populations. However, public diplomacy in a democracy is more complicated than a public relations campaign, for actions often trump words, particularly in the case of nuclear strategy.

This thesis examines the aims of policy, strategy, and mass persuasion and its civil-military character as manifested in the atomic public diplomacy in the Cold War until the 1980s, but especially of the “classical” period, 1940s–1960s. Specifically, it studies public presentation of nuclear issues through three media: U.S. television, the Soviet peace offensive, and official communiqués of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

In each example, leaders sought to shape citizens’ views on warfare in order to garner the support necessary to carry out an expensive strategy that required tremendous faith from the political public. These three examples shed light on the importance of mass politics in the creation and implementation of strategy in an era of high tension and rapid technological innovation.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

APN	Novosti Press Agency
BMD	ballistic missile defense
DOD	Department of Defense
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
LTBT	Limited Test Ban Treaty
IO	Information Operations
MAD	mutually assured destruction
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT	Non Proliferation Treaty
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TASS	Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union
USIA	United States Information Agency

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## **I. SHADOW OF THE BOMB**

In 1955, NATO, with its tactical air forces, undertook a major field exercise of the new doctrine of massive retaliation. The event transpired in a young West Germany, just emerging from the wreckage of war as a new NATO member, and the much-touted event saw the fighter bombers of the U.S. Air Force and other Atlantic allies swoop into action over northern and southern Germany. This exercise simulated the dropping of dozens of nuclear weapons on an imaginary enemy, as well as collateral damage to the population of the Federal Republic of Germany—to the tune of millions of irradiated, vaporized, and otherwise atomically dead West Germans. The popular backlash was swift, and the event helped give birth to the anti-nuclear movement in central Europe that continues to shape trans-Atlantic relations into the year 2014 in the face of the crisis in the Ukraine with a resurgent Russia. Nonetheless, NATO and its nuclear weapons as well as its alliance of values and burdens live on today in the shadow of Russian aggression in Crimea—in part because of enduring power and rhetoric of the message of a united West. How did NATO mass persuasion and propaganda square the circle of the transformed face of war amid subject populations lodged between the devil and the deep blue sea of collective defense and horrifying mass atomic death in the early nuclear age?

This thesis examines the aims of policy and strategy and mass persuasion of the trans-Atlantic alliance and its civil-military character as manifested in the atomic public diplomacy in the Cold War until the 1980s, and especially of the “classical” period, the 1940s through the 1960s. These aims changed as the threat of thermonuclear war expanded in the phases of the Cold War and its advances of weapons technology and nuclear crises, whereby the atomic bomb gave way to the hydrogen bomb, as well as the advent of brush-fire wars, missile crises, and the lurid episodes of the Cold War, which seemed to usher in the destruction of all that was to be defended by a policy of nuclear deterrence against an implacable and aggressive foe.

## A. THEORIZING NUCLEAR WARFARE

Soldiers in the higher echelons of command over the last century have become obsessed with popular will and the elements of anger and hatred, that is, morale and its tendency in their minds to collapse in crisis as the prelude to the stab in the back. The role of technology as the measure of all things great and small has exacerbated this syndrome of fears about morale in conflict. Since September 11, drones and automated technology have become central features of conflict, and the impact of this technology on perceptions of warfare begs for further interpretation. Such an interpretation, however, must rely on the record of an earlier time in Europe and the United States to provide a comparison. Likewise the ideology of the current conflict is not completely dissimilar from that of the Cold War in which winning populations was no less of a challenge than defeating violent foes. This thesis seeks to add precision to this comparison via an examination of the character, use, and evolution of nuclear public diplomacy in Europe and the United States of the Cold War.

Carl Von Clausewitz published his epic *On War* almost two centuries ago.<sup>1</sup> Despite the technological advances and the creation of a world where “the whole character of war as a means of settling differences has been transformed beyond all recognition,”<sup>2</sup> his work remains extremely important in understanding warfare. Clausewitz’s observations were rooted in both personal experiences with the title topic and extensive historical observation; he “knew that war is not a pleasant affair,” and offers unprecedented insight “to understand basically what war is all about, on its various levels of commitment and of violence.”<sup>3</sup>

This perspective is decidedly different from much of the dominant theory produced since the advent of the Atomic Age. In the absence of facts and experience on which to base concepts of thermonuclear warfare, theory has had considerable reign since

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1 Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War: Indexed Edition*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 63.

2 Bernard Brodie, “The Continuing Relevance of *On War*,” in *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 49.

3 Brodie, “The Continuing Relevance of *On War*,” 48.



the use of even one H-bomb would have entailed suffering and destruction on an unimaginable scale, even with the memories and wounds of the world wars so fresh. Furthermore, nuclear strategy based on game theory, mathematical calculation and other analytical methods frequently gloss over Clausewitz's timeless concept "that war in all its phases must be rationally guided by meaningful political purpose."<sup>4</sup> How has the dominance of nuclear theory shaped views of warfare on both sides of the Atlantic?

## **B. THREE THEMES**

Americans in the 20th century did not experience the horrors of total war on their own soil as was the case in Europe and Asia. The possibility of thermonuclear warfare and destruction of American cities was a concept not easily accepted or understood by American citizens. Still, the growing civil-military society of the United States of the epoch of total war in the 20th century took responsibility for educating its population and ensuring they were behind its agenda. Europe was poised to be the site of an east-west conflict for the third time in less than a century—this time with nuclear weapons. However, the reality of warfare struck much closer to home for survivors of the era of total warfare. Evidence of previous conflicts was a part of everyday life. Those who lived through the realities of the era of total war were much closer to the facts of war, whereas those removed from such experience must live based on theory. How did strategists address these vastly different populations during the Cold War?

There are three themes that reveal themselves upon closer inspection of the state-produced media from this era. First, Department of Defense and civil defense programs reflect the desire held by many American's to turn war, an inherently dirty business, into a somehow cleaner one. This misconception ignores Clausewitz's fog of war and has led to Americans substituting technology for strategy, the second theme present in the propaganda of this period. Americans' faith in technological superiority is epitomized by the nuclearization of the military in the 1950s and 1960s. Finally, the propaganda of this period reflects Carl Schmitt's friend-enemy dialectic made famous in his tract of the late

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<sup>4</sup> Brodie, "The Continuing Relevance of *On War*," 51, 45.

Weimar Republic but which speaks to other periods of the state of the exception and of democracy in crisis because of ideological conflict. The concept of all compromises as temporary in Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political* and the necessity of identifying friend and enemy as essential to one's human existence are reflected by the Cold War as an ideological struggle between two belief systems where war, in many people's mind, was inevitable.<sup>5</sup> The message presented to the American people was that preparations must be made to successfully fight and win a thermonuclear conflict with the Soviets.

One of the first steps for such an outcome was for the war to take place elsewhere, namely Europe. This development entailed a vastly different perspective on both sides of the Atlantic, despite the idea that NATO rested on a foundation of common values. Soldiers and civilians alike adjusted their concepts of policy, strategy, and military posture to fit the changing face of war with high technology while balancing restive and dissenting populations who looked upon the demands of nuclear deterrence as an exercise in madness and a fundamental imbalance of ends and means.

### **C. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Propaganda played a central role in the European era of total war in the 20th century. In the Cold War, the doctrines of mass politics, the atomic bomb and ideological stalemate loomed over European society in the form of nuclear propaganda on both sides of the Iron Curtain from 1948 until 1989. State-produced media of mass persuasion in this period portrayed the possibility of thermonuclear war in such a way which fostered support for a strategy increasingly dependent on nuclear technology and a militarization of democratic citizens. This portrayal reflects the civil-military agenda of the time as well as deeper realities about war, society, culture, the depiction of armed conflict and the role of the citizen in such conflict.

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<sup>5</sup> Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, Expanded Edition, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 26, 66.

## 1. Propaganda and Democracy

Various schools of thought struggle to explain “how a society aspiring to democracy may balance the right to persuade with the right of the public to free choice.”<sup>6</sup> J. Michael Sproule provides a survey of the subject in *Propaganda and Democracy*, exploring the evolving scholarship on the topic from the era of total war through the end of the Cold War.

Progressive studies of propaganda serve as a guard against “ivory tower thinking,” by exposing overly aggressive attempts by elites to persuade mass support of agendas based on incomplete information.<sup>7</sup> This school of thought grew from American muckraking that emerged in WWI and gained momentum with the unpopular Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal. This line of scholarly work tends to analyze events in which those possessing greater control of media outlets overstep perceived limits of democracy and rally support for specific ends by controlling the flow of information to the public. Public relations great Edward Bernays noted the importance of manipulation of the masses in democratic society and warned in the 1920s that “those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country.”<sup>8</sup> History presents numerous examples where such means have devastated societies. The rise of aggressive nationalism leading up to the outbreak of World War I, the propaganda machine of Nazi Germany, and the early popular support of the Vietnam War as an extension of the ideological conflict of the Cold War serve as prominent examples in which progressive historians cite the destructive potential of propaganda. The progressive view has tones of a Marxist interpretation of history in which democratic societies must be weary of those in control of information.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> J. Michael Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 271.

<sup>7</sup> Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, 270, 271.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Bernays, *Propaganda: With an Introduction by Mark Crispin Miller* (New York: Ig , 2005), 37.

<sup>9</sup> Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 266-77; Susan L. Carruthers, *The Media at War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 32–39, 264.

The counterpoint to anti-propaganda progressive critique is offered by communication practitioners who present a more neutral view of propaganda in which the effectiveness of the subject is questioned. This school of thought attempts to determine the methods by which communications are leveraged to steer the public for socially productive or destructive ends.<sup>10</sup> This approach has filled some of the gaps left by a progressive view but is limited in its' ability to measure social influence of various methods of propaganda.<sup>11</sup> This view also includes a critique of propaganda but from a "liberal bias" perspective of the media. Although this school of thought shares with the progressive view apprehension in trusting information presented to society, the body in question is the media industry rather than the state.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Atomic Culture

One of the first scholars to permeate popular culture thinking about the nuclear age was Herman Kahn. Kahn's *On Thermonuclear War* and *Thinking the Unthinkable* brought discussions of thermonuclear war to the public sphere. Ultimately, Kahn argues for the necessity to discuss and plan for the possibility of such a conflict so that it may be possible to "fight, survive, and win a thermonuclear war."<sup>13</sup> Kahn and all nuclear strategists are forced to acknowledge that "the outcome of decisions that are well-meaning, informed and intelligent can be disastrous. However, few would argue that this is a good reason to be malevolent, ignorant, or stupid. We have to do the best we can with the tools and abilities we have."<sup>14</sup>

Numerous scholars have looked back on the Cold War and attempted to discern the cultural impact of living in the shadow of thermonuclear war. Paul Boyer believes that there were three distinct periods when this impact was most acute: 1945–1948

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<sup>10</sup> Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, 270.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Rid, *War and Media Operations: The U.S. Military and the Press from Vietnam to Iraq* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 175–85; Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, 266; Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, 266–77.

<sup>13</sup> Herman Kahn, *Thinking about the Unthinkable* (New York: Horizon Press, 1962), 59.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 254.

following the end of WWII and the introduction of the atomic bomb; 1954–1963, when testing was at its height and fallout was a household subject; and a revitalized anti-nuclear surge during Reagan’s first term.<sup>15</sup> Stanley Kubrick’s *Dr. Strangelove* expresses many of the popular fears of the arms race and deterrence from this second period in a dark comedy about nuclear apocalypse due to automated controls, ego-driven military leaders, and miscommunications between Soviet and American leaders.<sup>16</sup> *Dr. Strangelove* remains a classic to students of the atomic era, but it only represents part of the atomic culture. *Atomic Culture: How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* plays on the subtitle of the iconic film but explores numerous peculiar aspects of this era including atomic board games, Ms. Atom Bomb pageants, atomic kitsch and atomic comics.<sup>17</sup> One scholar of atomic culture noted the ambiguity of the duality of the atomic age as a central tenant to building the “most powerful of all modern myths,”<sup>18</sup> while the “necessity of preventing another Hiroshima and Nagasaki”<sup>19</sup> was also a theme present in the majority of these early depictions of atomic culture.

Much of the scholarly work on atomic culture focuses on the dangers of thermonuclear warfare, the irresponsible and hawkish behavior of many bureaucratic and military decision makers, and their often foolishly portrayed efforts to rally support for atomic programs. The civil defense program is one such topic. The timeless *Duck and Cover* film impacted generations of American citizens, but civil defense programs remained a “speculative and somewhat fanciful idea that never really caught on in the

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<sup>15</sup> Paul Boyer, *Fallout: America’s Half-Century Encounter with Nuclear Weapons* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 95.

<sup>16</sup> Boyer, *Fallout*, 95–102.

<sup>17</sup> Scott C. Zeman and Michael A. Amundson, *Atomic Bomb: How we Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> Ferenc Morton Szasz, *Atomic Comics: Cartoonists Confront the Nuclear World* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2012), 135.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

United States.”<sup>20</sup> Ultimately, much of the literature on atomic culture praises antinuclear activists as “the last best hope for the future” in promoting a “more reasonable approach.”<sup>21</sup>

*Total Cold War* by Kenneth Osgood offers a study of propaganda specific to the Eisenhower administration in the formative years of the Cold War and pays particular attention to the balance between Eisenhower’s information campaign and his New Look for nuclear strategy. Eisenhower respected and utilized psychological warfare and information as a formidable weapon during WWII and continued to do so as president. Under his direct guidance, “from the highest levels of the national security establishment to the remotest diplomatic outposts abroad, political warfare became the organizing concept for American foreign policy.”<sup>22</sup>

A major aspect of this strategy was “managing domestic and international perceptions of the nuclear danger.”<sup>23</sup> As Eisenhower’s New Look pushed nuclear weapons to center stage and the catastrophic potential of thermonuclear war grew with rapidly improving technology, the president countered popular fears with the Atoms for Peace campaign. This effort helped satisfy “a psychological need to find something redeeming and worthwhile” in the technology and helped “propagate a friendly atomic discourse to rival the apocalyptic discourse that had characterized most discussions of the atom.”<sup>24</sup> Osgood does not focus on nuclear optimism or pessimism, but rather gives much needed attention to state sponsored attempts to ease anxiety and fear about the Cold War.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Allan M. Winkler, *Life under a Cloud: American Anxiety about the Atom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 135.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>22</sup> Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 78.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

## D. OVERVIEW

The technological advancements of the 1950s and 1960s, coupled with the polarization of the Cold War, pushed capabilities for thermonuclear warfare to the center of strategy. This development of an ideological conflict under the shadow of “the bomb” forced the Soviets and the West alike to wage a massive propaganda war.<sup>26</sup> Building on the scholarship already in place about the cultural impact of living in the shadow of thermonuclear war, this thesis is conceived as a historical study of the message presented to Western citizens by the state. The evidence and illustration comes from a comparison of three mediums of public diplomacy by three different actors in the Cold War era.

The era under study was defined not just by the advent and rise of nuclear weapons, but also by a communications revolution in which the medium of television was increasingly the main source by which Americans received information. As such, the first area of study focuses on film and television propaganda related to nuclear armaments. At the center of this study are such contemporary programs as *The Big Picture*. *The Big Picture* was a television series produced by the Department of Defense, presenting half-hour segments about various military capabilities and situations during the Cold War era. The program ran from 1950 to 1975 and aired on more than 300 television stations nationwide.<sup>27</sup> This chapter demonstrates how this and other state produced media reflect the values the state hoped to instill in Americans’ views of war, technology, and culture.<sup>28</sup>

While the West fought to ease anxieties over thermonuclear war and garner support for nuclear strategy, the Soviets also faced challenges in the realm of propaganda and public diplomacy. The Peace Offensive launched by Nikita Khrushchev in the 1950s and the idea of peaceful coexistence conflicted with U.S. intentions of convincing a democratic audience of the necessity of building a military and an Alliance armed with

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<sup>26</sup> Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, 213.

<sup>27</sup> *The Big Picture*, United States Army, 1950–1975, National Archives online public access, ARC ID 36952, Local ID TV-111: Records of the Office of the Chief of the Army Signal Corps 1860–1985, last accessed June 2014. <http://research.archives.gov/description/36952>.

<sup>28</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*; Szasz, *Atomic Comics*; Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 3-4.

the most modern nuclear technology. The Soviet propaganda machine attempted to disrupt technological advancements and defense spending in the United States, gain sympathy from third world states, support regimes similar to the Soviet model, and increase tensions within NATO. By reviewing the Soviet efforts to influence Western perspectives on nuclear arms, one can ground the analysis of American leaders' message to its own citizens.

The European audience of the 1950s was all too familiar with the realities of war. From 1914 to 1945, Europe witnessed more than 35 million war-related deaths, the majority of which were civilians.<sup>29</sup> The era of total war left its mark on a generation of Europeans where almost everyone had lost a relative, friend, or neighbor and "many never recovered from the pain of loss."<sup>30</sup> As a result, mourning was "endless, eternal."<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, a war waged between the growing superpowers of the United States the Soviet Union would most likely take place on the blood soaked lands of continental Europe. This was the audience NATO addressed in the 1950s and 1960s.

The European audience received messages from both American and Soviet media vying to win the battle for hearts and minds. Radio Free Europe was one overt method of spreading a pro-West message. The Hollywood movie industry was another source that reached viewers across the Atlantic. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Hollywood declared "full-scale war on international communism,"<sup>32</sup> which evolved into a positive propaganda message in the mid-1950s, and finally into a pro-détente message by the early 1960s.<sup>33</sup> However, there still remained the need for official statements, platforms,

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<sup>29</sup> Daniel Moran, "World War II Casualties" and "Armed Forces Casualties: 1914-1918," Naval Postgraduate School, NS3000, last accessed 18 February, 2014.  
<https://cle.nps.edu/access/content/group/6fe57197-ef32-4653-8d7c-1cd0c9c1c47d/06b%20World%20Wars%20Casualties.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Stéphane Audoin-Rouseau and Annette Becker, *14-18: Understanding the Great War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 225. Although the essay is an assessment of World War I mourning, it is also applicable to the sense of loss felt throughout Europe following World War II.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Tony Shaw and Denise Youngblood, *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2010), 19.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 18.



and declared strategy to avoid misperceptions at the highest echelon which could lead to truly disastrous consequences. The official NATO communiqués of the era in question serve as a third avenue of public diplomacy. Unique in their status as official messages from a multinational organization, these documents also demonstrate the insecurities present with those living in what would most likely have been ground zero for a violent showdown between the Soviets and the Americans. In this environment of competing ideologies, the NATO communiqués played a unique role in public diplomacy as a united message from the Alliance and demonstrate yet another medium by which strategy can be presented to the masses.

The present analysis interprets these sources through three lenses. First, perceptions of the role of citizens and the military in democratic societies during war and the cultural interpretation of these roles are explored. This thesis also adds to understanding of the media as a reflection of the gap between American views of war and war in reality. This analysis is framed by Clausewitz. The third framework is the ideological and cultural implications of the Cold War as seen in the various mediums and will be framed by Carl Schmidt's friend-enemy dialectic and his Concept of the Political. In the concluding chapter, these themes are related to contemporary perceptions of war, the ideological struggle of the War on Terror, and the overdependence on technology as a substitute for strategy.

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## II. A BOMB IN EVERY HOME: DEPICTIONS OF NUCLEAR WARFARE ON AMERICAN TELEVISION

In 1946, the United States was the only nation in possession of the atomic bomb, though it seemed only a matter of time before Russia acquired a weapon of its own, making “our security and that of all countries which today may be able to count on our protection far more precarious.”<sup>34</sup> With such a development, U.S. policymakers feared, the war-ravaged West might suffer a relapse of “those attitudes which so often in the past have destroyed friendship and confidence between the nations of Europe.”<sup>35</sup> Not just the superpowers but their European allies and dependencies well might “begin lining up for another world war,”<sup>36</sup> for “as the tension between them rises or falls, so will the fear which the atomic weapon has put into the hearts of men increase or decline.”<sup>37</sup>

When in 1949 the first Soviet nuclear test heralded the dawn of the Atomic Age, the citizens of today had to be prepared—if not mobilized—for the war of tomorrow.<sup>38</sup> American citizens, fresh off their victorious involvement in World War II, needed to be convinced to support a national security strategy reliant on nuclear weapons. Although in the early years of the Atomic Age this war of the future was expected to take place primarily in Europe, the battlefield quickly became global in scope. The relatively new medium of television served as the primary vehicle by which the military and government could present information about nuclear weapons and nuclear strategy to the American public. The message of these programs evolved along with advances in military technology to meet the demands of a changing audience during the period of 1949 to 1970.

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<sup>34</sup> Arnold Wolfers, “The Atomic Bomb in Soviet-American Relations,” *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order*, ed. Bernard Brodie (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946), 147.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, Third Ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 60.

## A. IN THE BEGINNING: FUN WITH ATOMS

Some of the first messages about nuclear war presented to the American public were explaining the mysteries of the atom, and, more importantly, convincing citizens that the United States could emerge from a nuclear war victorious.

One of the iconic movies from the early nuclear era is the 1951 Civil Defense educational movie, *Duck and Cover*.<sup>39</sup> Featuring the overly cautious animated Bert the Turtle, the movie instructs school-age children on what to do in case of an atomic bomb detonation. The movie had a resurgence of cultural notoriety as a feature in the 1981 documentary *Atomic Café* in which it was presented with a great deal of irony.<sup>40</sup> Much of the information, such as the notion that a newspaper or coat would offer shelter from an atomic blast, is outright propaganda exploiting early ignorance about the effects of the bomb.<sup>41</sup> However, *Duck and Cover* offers valuable insight into early interpretations of nuclear warfare. The film serves as a representation of the newly formed role of citizens in nuclear warfare and shows popular threat perceptions of the early 1950s. The program features a teacher presenting the two types of possible attacks: those with warning and those without. The first type of attack, one that comes with warning, is a testament to the faith in early warning systems and technology to mitigate the impact of nuclear war. The second type of attack, one without warning, was a new concept for the American citizen and one that caused considerable angst and needed to be addressed in order to gain popular support for strategies dependent on nuclear weapons.<sup>42</sup>

*Duck and Cover* addresses the possibility of nuclear war with two prominent themes in the message presented to the American people. The first is that with modern technology and constant vigilance one can live normally in the shadow of the

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<sup>39</sup> *Duck and Cover* (1951, Federal Civil Defense Administration), National Archives online public access, ARC ID AVA11109VNB1, FEDFLIX Collection. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.ntis.ava11109vnb1>.

<sup>40</sup> *Atomic Café*, directed by Kevin Rafferty (1982; The Archives Project), American Film Institute Online Catalogue of Feature Films. Last accessed June 2014. <http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/DetailView.aspx?s=&Movie=56725>.

<sup>41</sup> *Duck and Cover*.

<sup>42</sup> *Duck and Cover*.

bomb.<sup>43</sup> First, the movie hails U.S. civil defense forces and men in uniform who would “most likely” offer warning before an attack. The attentive civilians with binoculars represent another form of warning; however, these vigilant citizens also represent a blurring of the line between home front and battlefield. More important are the images of high-tech early detection systems. Although the technology is not explained to any degree, the message is clear: U.S. technology will conquer the Soviet atomic threat.

In case such technology falls short, the film dives into the second common theme of the propaganda of the time: with proper preparation, one can survive an atomic strike. Citizens needed assurance that they could survive in the event of a surprise attack. The reality of the advice ranged from extremely dubious to potentially useful in extreme circumstances. The child, diving off his bike for shelter offered by a street curb would stand little chance at against an atomic strike. Instructions to seek shelter inside a basement or hallway, however, were somewhat more realistic. The more important aspect of the film is that it offers hope that an atomic exchange would not necessarily result in total annihilation. *Duck and Cover* ignores the aftermath of atomic warfare and the inevitable dramatic social and economic consequences, but offers topical reassurance to viewers. The true value of the message is that training and preparation could mitigate the impact of an atomic blast, and it was the duty of citizens to be ready for such inevitability.

*A is for Atom* is an example of efforts to dispel some of the mystery associated with the Atomic Age. The animated film is designed for elementary-school audiences and recognizes that the “Dawn of the Atomic Age” has forced citizens to for any eventuality. The thrust of this film, however, is the power of the atom as the “answer to a dream as old as man himself... a source of infinite power.” This animated short focuses on the scientific benefits of atomic power in an effort to ease fears associated with the atomic age. The film notes the ability of science and industry to make the impossible possible with the production of the first atomic bomb. This emphasis on science and industry as a means to overcome seemingly unconquerable challenges strikes at the core of the idea of

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<sup>43</sup> *Duck and Cover*

strategy adopted by the public during the Atomic Age. The film concludes with an explanation that the “warrior” is only one of “many giants” made available to man by harnessing the atom.<sup>44</sup>

*Atomic Alert* is another film targeting the public about how to survive an atomic bomb. Again, the film has an overlay of technology as a means to conquer the threat of the atomic bomb. The group of children working with a Geiger counter transitions to scientists in a lab working with radioactive material before the narrator describes the slight chance of citizens being involved with an atomic bomb. The underlying message is that every citizen, just like members of the military, is part of the team designed effectively survive and defend against an atomic bomb: “Like any team,” the narrator notes, this team can “only be successful if every member knows his job.” The responsibility of the citizen of the atomic age is to practice and train to survive in the event of war. This video also addresses the danger of a bomb coming without warning and closes with the message “our very lives may depend on always being alert.”<sup>45</sup>

The message of these early films is that every citizen has a responsibility to always be alert and prepared for an atomic strike. This message addresses both the anxieties of citizens in the uncertain atomic age and the responsibilities of citizens in a time of war. The mass politics of the 19th and 20th centuries and the era of total war from 1914 to 1945 greatly increased the need for citizens to redefine their place in society at war. The educational films for general consumption and the military training films for members of the DOD sought to define this role.

## **B. MILITARY REPRESENTATIONS OF THE BOMB**

The messages presented to the American people were strikingly similar to those presented to the armed forces members in various training films from this era. Citizens

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<sup>44</sup> *A is for Atom* (1953, Sutherland Productions), National Archives online public access, Prelinger Archives Collection. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/isforAto1953>.

<sup>45</sup> *Atomic Alert* (1951, Encyclopedia Britannica Films), National Archives online public access, Prelinger Archives Collection. Last accessed June 2014. [https://archive.org/details/6037\\_Atomic\\_Alert\\_Elementary\\_version\\_00\\_38\\_27\\_15](https://archive.org/details/6037_Atomic_Alert_Elementary_version_00_38_27_15).

and soldiers alike required further explanation of the mystery of the atomic bomb in order to carry on normal life and the U.S. government's message placed great emphasis on modern technology and preparedness. One of the concerns that came with the bomb which required significant explanation was radiation. Citizens and soldiers shared concern with the impact of the 'new' threat of radiation, and the U.S. government sought to ease these fears.

The same emphasis on faith in technology and the need for preparedness as a solution for combating the Soviet atomic threat is the same message presented to troops in military training videos of the early 1950s. *Self-Preservation in an Atomic Bomb Attack* is a training film in which an experienced and knowledgeable Army master sergeant discusses the effects of an atomic bomb on a civilian target and what the young recruits in the video could do to enhance their survivability.<sup>46</sup> The master sergeant acknowledges the destructive potential of the bomb when he warns the recruits that, without proper preparation they would "have a future like an ice cube in a hot toddy."<sup>47</sup> However, when he notes that the bomb is "like a woman" and the recruits would be wise to "never underestimate its power," he downplays the threat of the bomb by relating it to a challenging, but manageable aspect of life.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the master sergeant draws similarities between an atomic strike and the Battle of Britain, and notes that the British were able to survive because of well executed civil defense measures.

In the final frames of the video, the young sailor expresses concern over a surprise attack. The senior non-commissioned officer eases his fears by reminding him that worrying about the unexpected is futile; "a safe could fall on your head," but more importantly reminding the sailor that with the correct measures he can survive an attack, and moreover it is his duty to do so and continue his military responsibilities.<sup>49</sup> *Medical*

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<sup>46</sup> *Self-Preservation in an Atomic Bomb Attack* (1950; The Armed Forces Special Weapons Project), National Archives online public access, Prelinger Archives Collection. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/preserve>.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

*Aspects of Nuclear Radiation* is a 1951 Department of Defense film aimed specifically at easing fears about radiation. The narrative downplays misunderstandings about the dangers of nuclear radiation. Radiation, the movie explains, is a natural occurrence and is similar to the rays one is exposed to while sunbathing. Like a sunburn, bee sting, or rattlesnake bite, radiation can be tolerated at various levels by different individuals.

This film also harps on the mastery of science over radiation, citing the example of cancer treatment. In the event of nuclear war, one must be much more worried about the blast effects of the bomb than the radiation, because with proper preparation science can mitigate the impacts of radiation. The film shows a group of men playing cards, presumably in a concrete structure, briefly pause while a nuclear blast goes off outside. After a brief flicker of the lights and a shrug of the shoulders, the card game continues. Worrying about radiation, the narrator advises, is like worrying about lead-poisoning while engaged in a gunfight. Furthermore, the blast effects are not-unlike those experienced and survived by soldiers in WWII. Ultimately the film seeks to put citizens' fears about radiation at ease by restoring faith in technology and preparedness to mitigate the damaging effects of nuclear war.<sup>50</sup>

The reference to WWII bombings in *Medical Aspects of Radiation*, like that in many of the other programs, is a reflection of the early visions of how the bomb would be used. The strategic bombing campaign launched against Japan by General Curtis Lemay and Colonel Tommy Powers had introduced a concept that had already made massive casualties in bombing a reality with the hundred thousand plus deaths resulting from the firebombing of Tokyo. To some strategists in the early stages of the atomic era, the power of the atomic bomb was “only a quantitative distinction,” and it was “just another weapon in the arsenal.”<sup>51</sup> With the creation of Strategic Air Command (SAC) in 1948 under the leadership of General Curtis LeMay, early plans for the use of nuclear weapons were a continuation of those used in World War II. LeMay identified transportation,

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<sup>50</sup> *Medical Aspects of Nuclear Radiation* (1951; The Armed Forces Special Weapons Project), National Archives online public access, FedFlix Collection. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.23284>.

<sup>51</sup> Stephen M. Younger, *The Bomb: A New History* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009.) 47.



industry, and infrastructure targets across the Soviet Union. However, this strategy was accompanied by the realization that the Soviets would likely draw similar plans. Such a conclusion logically led to the expectation that Americans would face a bombing campaign similar to those of World War II.<sup>52</sup>

Although a parallel existed between the initial plans on how to implement nuclear weapons and World War II strategy, the early years of the Atomic Era also presented the military with a challenge that was decidedly different from the traditional American approach to war. Following the Axis surrender, Americans were set to collect the peace dividend and reduce the massive wartime military, a venture into which President Truman dove headlong. Although military leaders acknowledged that nuclear weapons would play a role in such a conflict, they also realized “war with the Soviet Union would require immense quantities of military manpower.”<sup>53</sup> Such manpower would require rabid mobilization of industry and of massive conscript force. Educating the American public, starting with school age children and continuing through prime time television, about the hazards of nuclear war was one way to prepare the population for mobilization should conflict erupt.<sup>54</sup>

### C. THE BIG PICTURE

With a view of a home front besieged by strategic bombing and the need for a massive conscript army occupying territory abroad, the distinction between civilian and soldier lost the clarity enjoyed by Americans during World War II. The need to have a public prepared for nuclear war was a logical step. The television presented a medium to reach citizens *en masse* and prepare them to do their part in a potential conflict.

One program that sought to bridge the gap between soldier and citizen was *The Big Picture*. *The Big Picture* was produced by the United States Army between 1950 and

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<sup>52</sup> Younger, *The Bomb*, 48-9.

<sup>53</sup> Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973), 369

<sup>54</sup> Weigley, *American Way of War*, 368-9.

1975 and aired on ABC.<sup>55</sup> This series featured information about various aspects of the military. Featuring Master Sargent Steve Queen as the narrator and host, *The Big Picture* portrayed a technologically advanced military ready to take on any opposition. The messages of technology coupled with individual vigilance as a means for military victory also sought to ease citizens' fears of the Soviet threat while reminding the masses of its role in a nation preparing for war.

An early episode entitled "Individual Preparedness in Atomic Attack" harps on the importance of individual foot soldiers as the backbone of every army. By tying the nuclear bomb into the larger narrative of technological advances that "challenged the fighting man," nuclear war was portrayed as a conflict which still accounts for the importance of individuals. Although MSgt. Queen acknowledges that nuclear weapons may be the greatest challenge to soldiers yet, it can be met just as soldiers overcame the challenges of the catapult, crossbow, rifle, or tank. Most importantly, "many of the methods employed are equally applicable to citizens of our country in the event of an atomic attack."<sup>56</sup> The review of the damage of Hiroshima comes away with the conclusion that soldiers must continue to do their job in the event of an attack, and this may be truer for those in the rear than those on the front line, for industrial and logistics hubs may be the most likely to suffer nuclear attack. For the civilian audience targeted by the show, this message strikes a chord particularly close to home.

In addition to preaching vigilance, the video seeks to explain the bomb in order to help soldiers and citizens come to terms with the possibility of nuclear war. This takes the form of going over various ways to minimize radiation and blast exposure. This also explains the difference between air bursts, surface blasts, and underwater explosions, and highlights the general military bearing necessary to carry out a mission following an

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<sup>55</sup> *The Big Picture*, United States Army, 1950-1975, National Archives online public access, ARC ID 36952, Local ID TV-111: Records of the Office of the Chief of the Army Signal Corps 1860-1985. Last accessed June 2014. <http://research.archives.gov/description/36952>.

<sup>56</sup> "Individual Protection Against Atomic Attack," *The Big Picture* episode 393 (U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, ARC Identifier 2569661 / Local Identifier 111-TV-393. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.archives.arc.2569661>.

atomic attack. Although “there is no minimizing the potency of the nuclear weapon,”<sup>57</sup> with training and information one can greatly increase the chances of survival. Ultimately the message of this episode is that with proper preparation the damage of nuclear attack can be mitigated. Soldiers and by extension citizens, have a duty to be vigilant and prepared to carry out their duty following an attack. For soldiers, this is not different than any other military obligations. For citizens, this message calls for a society prepared to engage in total war.

These early programs reflect uncertainty on the ways which the new technology of the atomic bomb would be integrated into national security policy. With the first Soviet bomb tested in 1949, the thought of a devastating strike reaching anywhere on the home front caused great angst with the American people.<sup>58</sup> The fear of bomb, however, was outweighed by fear of the Soviet menace. By 1950, Americans “seemed not only ready to accept the bomb, but to support any measures necessary to maintain atomic supremacy.”<sup>59</sup> These programs demonstrate an effort to meet the demand for acceptance of the bomb. One cannot argue, then, that the films spawned from a need to manufacture consent. Official efforts to educate citizens were not driven by a need to persuade citizens to support the arms race that would follow. Rather, they represent the government’s effort to provide the masses material with which they could justify their already implied consent of a national defense strategy featuring nuclear weapons.

#### **D. THE NEW LOOK**

With Eisenhower’s New Look in the wake of the Korean War and the advent of the hydrogen bomb, the notion that nuclear war could successfully be waged and won with the proper preparation transitioned from an implied message to doctrine. The result was the placement of strategic airpower at the “forefront of the nation’s Cold War

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Freedman, *Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 60.

<sup>59</sup> Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 334.

defense policy.”<sup>60</sup> With this transition the message to the public remained focused on technology as the means to mitigate the perils of nuclear warfare.

*The Big Picture* hails the technological prowess of the modern military in numerous episodes during this era. One of the best examples is the episode “The Common Defense” (1959). This episode offers a summary of the recent technological and operational successes of the military. Queen emphasizes that the armed forces “Form a mighty flexible shield, which by its very existence deters the sinister designs of the forces of aggression. Your Army, Navy, and Air Force, form a valiant team that continues to discharge with glory its great and proud responsibility; The Common Defense of the United States.”<sup>61</sup> With a montage of current military forces mixed with the monuments of Washington, DC, the narrator notes the communist forces that threaten the free world. The emphasis then goes to each branch launching satellites, the marvels of NASA, and an explanation of the cooperation of military and industry in excelling the development and production of ballistic missiles. These pleasing images of the F-104 Starfighter, the USS *Nautilus*, and the Hercules missiles and the men of “vision and daring” who operate them present an image of the servicemen of today directly linked to the minutemen of Bunker Hill and Continentals of Valley Forge.<sup>62</sup>

Another interesting aspect of this episode is the emphasis on the role of the U.S. military not just defending for the defense of the homeland, but for the common defense of the world. Operations in the arctic contribute to global knowledge, Navy and Army efforts in Formosa caused the Chinese Red menace to stand down-for now, and our NATO anchor, Turkey, demonstrated proficiency in the U.S. weapons while celebrating their independence. This emphasis on global defense is not unique in *The Big Picture*;

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<sup>60</sup> Herman S. Wolk, “The New Look,” *Air Force Magazine*, August 2003, 80.

<sup>61</sup> “The Common Defense,” *The Big Picture*, episode 433 (U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, FEDFLIX Collection, ARC Identifier 2569697 / Local Identifier 111-TV-433. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.archives.arc.2569697>.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

however, this example links the recent technological advances of the military directly with the U.S.-led Allied defense against communist expansion worldwide.<sup>63</sup>

Nearly two billion dollars was given to 40 Allied nations to strengthen the common defense, McQueen notes, but with the emphasis on research and development and new, not yet realized technology, there remains an underlying sense of the need to look toward the future. This takes a not so indirect route when McQueen takes time to explain the necessity of raising military pay to obtain not just men of a fighting spirit, but with highly technical and specialized training. Defense Secretary Neal McElroy makes an appearance at the closing of the episode to remind the audience that the funding being spent on the defense forces and the highly technical experts is essential, now more than ever. As the episode closes with scenes from top universities producing citizens ready to improve the world, the service academies churning out the future military leaders, and scenes across the United States including a heavy dose of workers and church going citizens all to a chorus of God Bless America, the technology and preparedness of the armed forces becomes synonymous with the American way of life.<sup>64</sup>

The image presented to the American public in *The Big Picture* is one tying the nuclear bomb to the ideological struggle of the Cold War. Another episode focused on this theme is “The Sharper Sword and the Stronger Shield” (1959). The episode begins by citing the 2.5 million-strong Soviet army and the additional 4 million troops being trained by the Chinese, North Vietnamese, and North Korea satellites as steps being taken by our communist rivals to prepare for an all-out conventional war. Although the 900,000 U.S. troops are supplemented with 2 million from NATO, it is not mere numbers that will allow us to prevail in the struggle. Rather, training and equipping these men with the most modern weapons possible and the images of the high-tech forces of the future represent the best strategy for the Free World to succeed against the Communist bloc.

The emphasis on the necessity of our forces to be flexible enough to respond quickly and with enough power to accomplish the mission calls for a qualitative strength

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> “The Common Defense,” *The Big Picture*, episode 433.

vice a quantitative strength in the military of the future. Modern weapons and a force prepared for the atomic battle area are presented as the solution for the challenges of today and tomorrow. McQueen notes, “The challenge is one faced not just by the Army, but by the nation,” prompting a conversation about the cost of current requirements and the need to continue technological advances, “for today’s finest weapons are tomorrows second best” and “there is no second place in war.”<sup>65</sup> This reflects the need to instill in the citizens of the United States a sense of duty and responsibility to financially supporting the DOD. This includes supporting artillery and rockets, both nuclear and conventional, necessary to cover increasing distances.<sup>66</sup>

#### **E. THE BIG PICTURE IN THE 1960S**

As the Cold War entered its second decade, nuclear weapons remained central to national strategy. In 1961 and 1962, this conflict entered into a stage of acute crisis. The presentation of nuclear issues to the American people, however, moved away from center stage. The episodes of *The Big Picture* in the early 1960s were largely a series of historical pieces such as “Breakout and Pursuit” about Operation Cobra, “What makes a General” about West Point, “Beyond the Call” about Medal of Honor recipients, and a

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<sup>65</sup> “The Sharper Sword and the Stronger Shield,” *The Big Picture*, episode 449 (U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, FedFlix Collection, ARC Identifier 2569709, Local Identifier 111-TV-449. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.archives.arc.2569709>.

<sup>66</sup> “The Sharper Sword and the Stronger Shield,” *The Big Picture*, episode 449..

series of episodes profiling “Famous Generals.”<sup>67</sup> There were, however, some episodes focused on current military units and missions. These episodes emphasized duty of the American soldier to defend freedom around the world, the capability of the U.S. military, and the quality of the U.S. soldier.

In a two-part series titled “The U.S. Army in Berlin: Timetable for Crisis” and “Checkpoint Charlie,” *The Big Picture* reviewed the importance of the presence in Berlin as the Berlin crisis from 1958 until 1961 had reached an extreme with the construction of the wall along the inner German border. The soldiers have “learned to live with tension...to maintain our rights in West Berlin and carry out the United States’ policies.”<sup>68</sup> The episodes complete with menacing music, and shots of East German and Soviet military personnel, demonstrate the threat to the West present in Berlin. In these episodes, the fundamental differences in ideology and way of life between East and West Germany take center stage instead of nuclear weapons. The American soldiers are presented as the defenders of freedom, and are even thanked by local West German citizens. As the episode reveals the escalation of the Berlin Crisis, there is the constant message that the vigilance and resolve of the American soldier kept the situation under

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<sup>67</sup> “Breakout and Pursuit,” *The Big Picture* (1961: U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, FedFlix Collection, PIN 30135. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.30135>;

“Beyond the Call- Part I,” *The Big Picture* (1962: U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, FedFlix Collection, PIN 30145. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.30145>;

“What Makes a General,” *The Big Picture* (U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, FedFlix Collection, ARC Identifier 2569649 / Local Identifier 111-TV-381. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.archives.arc.2569649>;

“Famous Generals- MacArthur,” *The Big Picture* (1963: U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, FedFlix Collection, PIN 30151. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.30151.b>;

“Famous Generals- Patton,” *The Big Picture* (1963: U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, FedFlix Collection, PIN 30156. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.30156>;

“Famous Generals- Stilwell,” *The Big Picture* (1963: U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, FedFlix Collection, PIN 30158. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.30158>.

<sup>68</sup> “The United States Army in Berlin: Timetable for Crisis,” *The Big Picture*, episode 530 (1962; U.S. Army Signal Corps). YouTube. Last accessed June 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0URCyPm2gA>.

control while forcing the communists to eventually back down. The message in the episodes about Berlin is summarized in the closing remarks of “Checkpoint Charlie;” “the weight of the burden of freedom’s defense once again rests upon soldiers, upon their determination to carry out their responsibilities. On the front line of the free world, these soldiers of the United States Army are well prepared.”<sup>69</sup>

Another theme in *The Big Picture* during the 1960s was the quality of the American soldier. In “Your Military Neighbor,” the role of service members in the community both stateside and abroad is emphasized as part of the conscription military and the U.S. version of the citizen soldier at the dawn of the Vietnam War. Boy Scouts, parenthood, physical fitness programs, medical missions and engineering projects are cited as examples of the peaceful and constructive contributions service members make to society while still “standing ready to counter any threat.”<sup>70</sup> In “Character Guidance,” viewers witness the moral training given to troops to better prepare them for challenges, because “Our army today is being equipped with new and more powerful weapons to deter any aggressor. But the caliber of our weapons alone will not win a war, or even defend our nation successfully. It is the caliber of the men behind the weapons that will decide any future conflict.”<sup>71</sup>

This emphasis on the value of the individual soldier and the historic triumphs of the United States Military is a change in the presentation of the military to the public from the 1950s episodes of *The Big Picture* which emphasized the modern technology and weapons of the atomic age. Multiple factors contributed to this change. In the 1950s the concept of nuclear warfare was new and brought much uncertainty to the minds of American citizens. By the 1960s, people had grown accustomed to living in the shadow of

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<sup>69</sup> “The United States Army in Berlin: Checkpoint Charlie,” *The Big Picture*, episode 536 (1962; U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, Fedflix Collection PIN 30140. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.30140>.

<sup>70</sup> “Your Military Neighbor,” *The Big Picture*, episode 675 (1966; U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, Fedflix Collection, PIN 30191. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.30191>.

<sup>71</sup> “Character Guidance,” *The Big Picture* (U.S. Army Signal Corps), National Archives online public access, FedFlix Collection, ARC Identifier 2569694 / Local Identifier 111-TV-429. Last accessed June 2014. <https://archive.org/details/gov.archives.arc.2569694>.



the bomb and the Soviet threat did not seem as eminent as the age of Sputnik. Furthermore, the faith in technology introduced in the 1950s may have taken effect by the following decade. The Berlin crisis of 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 marked two of the tensest moments of the Cold War. Yet the emphasis of these programs is more the history and tradition of the U.S. military than on the capabilities of the times. Some themes that remained in the 1960s were the value of individual soldiers in modern warfare and the quality of American Troops. In the 1960s, as leftist tendencies began to dominate popular culture, it was important for the *Big Picture* to remind the public “not to forget or take servicemen for granted in times of peace.”<sup>72</sup> With this emphasis on the history and tradition of the military images of nuclear weapons and modern technology were pushed to the periphery of the military image, despite their ascendancy to the highest levels of military strategy.

#### **F. WINNING THE NUCLEAR WAR WITH VIGILANCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

The messages from the 1950s can best be classified as futuristic militarism. *The Big Picture* and other programs sought to depict nuclear technology as an asset to be utilized for the interests of the free world, but the effort required all citizens to do their part. During the first decade of the Cold War images of mushroom clouds represented “U.S. dominance and hope for the future.”<sup>73</sup> Anxieties were eased by presenting the bomb as “unthreatening technology to be exploited” which “allowed Americans to support the new central tenant of National Defense.”<sup>74</sup> Along with this effort to ease concerns over the new technology was the promotion of civic duty on citizens to embrace responsibilities traditionally reserved for those in the military.

The presentation of nuclear warfare also shifted with developments in nuclear strategy. The comparison of the atom bomb to World War II bombing campaigns in *A is*

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<sup>72</sup> “Your Military Neighbor,” *The Big Picture*, episode 675.

<sup>73</sup> A. Costandina Titus, “The Mushroom Cloud as Kitsch,” *Atomic Culture: How we Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, eds. Scott Zeman and Michael Amundson (Boulder, CO; University Press of Colorado, 2004), 106..

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

for *Atom* and other early programs reflect early strategy regarding the atomic bomb. In the years immediately following World War II, leaders still viewed the bomb simply as a larger version of conventional air munitions and the best and most likely use would be through strategic bombing. Although there were some currents questioning the strategic validity of the bomb, the prevailing thought was that the bomb was an “irresistible force in contemporary warfare” and “the best available means to redressing military balance.”<sup>75</sup> As strategy shifted toward flexible response the image of nuclear warfare was presented with greater emphasis on the human element on the nuclear battlefield. Ground forces on the nuclear battlefield and the actual service members assigned to SAC took a more prevalent role in episodes of *The Big Picture*.

Audiences of the 1950s were defined by patriotism and enthusiasm for the American military. In contrast, the 1960s saw “the decline of cold-war patriotic and civic pageantry.”<sup>76</sup> As the public became more aware of the potential impacts of nuclear warfare and more wary about conflict in general, the subject of nuclear war disappeared from the Big Picture. This decline did not owe to a single cause. The consumerism so essential to the American way of life provided more options, freedoms that also encouraged people to question and become involved with the direction of foreign policy aims. As the Soviet threat receded into détente, so did the urgency central to creating the sense of duty in citizens’ lives. All of these were aspects of “the cruel paradox that what required defense through patriotic and civic activism also generated competition for the time and energies the guardians of cold-war civic virtue demanded of their fellow-Americans.”<sup>77</sup>

One characteristic that remained constant throughout this period was the emphasis on vigilance. The alertness demonstrated by Bert the Turtle in *Duck and Cover* brought this message to elementary school children. Again in *Atomic Alert* citizens promoted this value. The message was military members were taught the value of alertness in the face

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<sup>75</sup> Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 53.

<sup>76</sup> Fried, *The Russians are Coming!*, 151.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 159.

of thermonuclear war in *Self-Preservation in an Atomic Bomb Attack*. *The Big Picture* episodes cherished vigilance as one of the most important characteristics of our military members, whether in “The Sharper Sword and the Stronger Shield” or “United States Army in Berlin” this trait defeated nuclear armed communist foes. Likewise in the series of episodes in the 1960s focusing on great military leaders of the past, vigilance and preparedness were highlighted as qualities intrinsic in U.S. forces.

The period in question witnessed a public, first wary of the atomic bomb, transition to one supportive of a strategy reliant on nuclear weapons and then come full circle with the anti-war sentiments of the late 1960s. The message presented to the American people likewise shifted to promote and react to the changing opinion. This evolution is a demonstration of an empowered public wrestling with the theoretical benefits of nuclear deterrence and the reality of warfare with the conflict in Vietnam. Theorizing nuclear warfare and presenting its image proved to be an easier task when the reality of warfare was absent, or at least a fading memory, in the American conscience. As the United States transitions from a 10-year experience of ongoing conflict in the Middle East which was politicized and televised daily, once again citizens must determine their role in a democratic society with relation to external threats and the role of nuclear armaments in national security strategy.

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### III. OLIVE BRANCHES AND ICBMS: THE SOVIET PEACE OFFENSIVE

Soviet strategic communications pursued goals similar to those of the United States in both garnering the support of the domestic population and influencing the behavior of populations abroad. The challenge in public presentation was similar to the approach taken by the Soviet Union in ruling its diverse populations. The vast territory of the Russian Empire included rural and urban populations; ethnic groups to the east descended from Mongolian nomads, minorities in the Caucasus with closer ties to the Middle East, and western oriented populations in the Central European satellites; each of which required different policies. Comparisons of Soviet practices in these regions demonstrate a tendency to tailor methods to fit specific populations. Domestically, this challenge was more manageable thanks to the monopoly on communications. Abroad, this was considerably more difficult due to Western emphasis on transparency and resistance to propaganda. Ultimately, from the Western perspective, Soviet messages regarding nuclear strategy were marked by inconsistency and received with skepticism and mistrust.<sup>78</sup>

In the 1950s, the Soviet Peace Offensive presented an image of the Soviet Union as a responsible power and discussions of disarmament first came to the table.<sup>79</sup> This period represents a merging of the two formative challenges of the Cold War: the battle for hearts and minds and the pursuit of successful nuclear strategy. The nature of the west and the freedom of speech central to any democracy allow for dissenting opinions to penetrate any academic or social discourse; in fact such dissent is encouraged and essential to the functioning of democratic societies. The idea of transparency—the “right

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<sup>78</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, “Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy: An Interpretive Essay,” *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*, ed. Hugh Ragsdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 315-359. 341-2

<sup>79</sup>Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 73-4.

to know what their government was doing”—was “embedded in the American polity.”<sup>80</sup> At the same time, the post-World War II US and Western Europe populations were well aware of the dangers of mass persuasion and increasingly “wary about communication.”<sup>81</sup> These were the challenges confronting both Soviet and Western policy makers in the realm of public nuclear diplomacy. Both the Soviets and the United States attempted to sell their systems by gaining a better understanding of their target audiences. The Soviet information campaign never quite managed to understand the interests of western citizens enough to present its case in an appealing fashion.<sup>82</sup>

The Soviets faced a twofold challenge. Khrushchev needed to keep his citizens vigilant and prepared for the inevitable struggle with the imperialist West in the Marxist-Leninist teleological progression of mankind, but at the same time “there had to remain a future for mankind.”<sup>83</sup> This same concept transferred to the international realm, where Soviet leaders worked at “stoking those revolutionary fires while at the same time insuring that they would not lead to open conflagration.”<sup>84</sup> The result was an often tough to interpret combination of “menacing thrusts against the West with a search for detente with the United States.”<sup>85</sup>

## **A. PROPAGANDA AND THE SOVIET STATE**

The nature of a revolutionary state rests on creating total mass support. To this end, the revolution in Russia was “unthinkable before the era of mass politics, before the

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<sup>80</sup> James J. Marquadt, “Transparency and Security Competition: Open Skies and America’s Cold War Statecraft, 1948-1960,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* Volume 9 Number 1, Winter 2007, 55-87, 83. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cws/summary/v009/9.1marquadt.html>

<sup>81</sup> J. Michael Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1997), 52.

<sup>82</sup> Marquadt, “Transparency and Security Cooperation,” 62-63, 82-84.

<sup>83</sup> Alexander J. Groth and Stuart Britton, “Gorbachev and Lenin: Psychological Walls of the Soviet ‘Garrison State,’” *Political Psychology*, 14, no. 4 (Dec., 1993), 639. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3791378>

<sup>84</sup> Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 302.

<sup>85</sup> Groth and Britton, “Psychological Walls of the Soviet Garrison State,” 639.

development of modern communications... before the time of modern propaganda.”<sup>86</sup> Those who formed the definitive Soviet institutions developed their mentality during the Revolution in which success was enabled “because they were better than their opponents in getting their message across to the people.”<sup>87</sup> This mentality of managing mass politics through indoctrination permeated the Soviet state and manifested itself in the foreign policy outlook well beyond the lifespan of the leaders of the Revolution. In the 1930s, Stalin pressed the idea of a revolutionary movement abroad to achieve the objectives of the Soviet state. Following WWII, this approach to foreign relations joined with a “‘peace movement’ that was now centered on atomic weapons.”<sup>88</sup> During the Cold War the socialist idea of the Popular Front, coupled with this “peace movement,” “would be among the more potent weapons in the Soviet arsenal.”<sup>89</sup>

The Popular Front movement, however, was not a product of the Cold War, but rather a defensive concept developed in the interwar period to bury the hatchet between socialist and communist movements in the face of European fascism. This front had two main approaches. The first was in the revolutionary tradition of “mass uprising of the oppressed; violent destruction of the state; confrontation with the dominant classes to uproot the bases of their power; retribution and reprisals against the old order; extreme vigilance for the security of the revolution.”<sup>90</sup> The second thrust was a gradualism that instead emphasized “changing the system from within by incremental advance.”<sup>91</sup> This

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<sup>86</sup> Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 5.

<sup>87</sup> Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State*, 4.

<sup>88</sup> Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy*, 302.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 267.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

change came through public influence by working-class and progressive movements rather than violent uprising and recognized “breadth of consensus”<sup>92</sup> as the key element to victory.<sup>93</sup>

It was this second form of a worldwide communist movement that lasted beyond World War II and into the Cold War with the formation of the Cominform in 1947. The Cominform was designed to further international socialist revolutionary movements, but came to rely on the truism that any authentic socialist movement required “political, economic, and military aid from the Soviet Union.”<sup>94</sup> This myth led the Cominform to evolve into little more than “an instrument of Soviet interests.”<sup>95</sup>

Although the Popular Front ideology was one of the strongest attributes of the Soviet Union in the Cold War, it also was one of the fundamental causes of the conflict. There existed “structural incompatibilities”<sup>96</sup> between western democratic institutions and Soviet socialism. However, more so than expansionist ideas, hegemonic aspirations, or misunderstandings it was the Soviet “projection of these methods into the international arena”<sup>97</sup> which prevented coexistence from being a viable option. The shift to a gradual approach to worldwide socialist movement caused opponents to be more fearful of an underground, internal enemy than they were of open revolutionaries. The West held firm in its belief that “in their [Soviet] eyes there are two worlds which cannot live together and that sooner or later one or the other must triumph”<sup>98</sup> and any rhetoric to the contrary was thus undermined by these fears. The presentation of revolutionary ideas to the free world by the Soviets following World War II was received by democratic nations with

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ivan T. Berend, *Decades of Crisis: Central and Eastern Europe Before World War II* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 65-69; Eley, *Forging Democracy*, 262-8,

<sup>94</sup> Heinz Timmermann, *The Decline of the World Communist Movement: Moscow Beijing and Communist Parties in the West*, trans. Julius W. Friend (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), 28.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 29, 25-31.

<sup>96</sup> Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy*, 298.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Strategy and Tactics of World Communism* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1948), 19.



the same trepidation that marked socialist movements for the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; these movements were seen as a threat to domestic and international politics and were received accordingly.

## **B. PEACEFUL PROPAGANDA AND NUCLEAR BLUSTER: 1949–1962**

The formation of NATO on 4 April 1949 presented a direct threat to the Soviet sphere of influence.<sup>99</sup> Five months later, the Soviets ended the U.S. monopoly on nuclear weapons in the first steps toward counterbalancing the growing U.S. superpower.<sup>100</sup> With this development, the Cold War took shape as a conflict “characterized by a war of words and threatened use of nuclear weapons...in which the idea of nuclear war was constantly on the mind of international public opinion.”<sup>101</sup> This feeling was only exacerbated with more powerful weapons and arsenals in the coming years, particularly thermonuclear weapons. The Soviets tested their first thermonuclear device with the RDS-6 in 1953 shortly after the U.S. Mike test at Bikini Atoll in 1952.<sup>102</sup>

Along with these developments came the changing of the Soviet guard with Stalin’s death in 1953. At Stalin’s funeral, Prime Minister Georgi Malenkov attempted to address the growing international tensions when he stated “there is no dispute... which could not be settled by peaceful means.”<sup>103</sup> Malenkov’s tenure was short-lived, however, and after a two-year power struggle, Khrushchev emerged as the new Soviet leader and immediately launched an effort that came to be known as the Peace Offensive. The title derived from the Soviet campaign focused on combating U.S. policy and interest under

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<sup>99</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty, 4 April 1949.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>100</sup> Pavel Podvig, ed., *Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 2.

<sup>101</sup> Phillip Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 250.

<sup>102</sup> Gordon S. Barrass, *The Great Cold War: A Journey Through the Hall of Mirrors* (California: Stanford University Press, 2009), 91; Allan M. Winkler, *Life Under a Cloud: American Anxieties about the Atom* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 76. Podvig, *Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces*, 2; The US tested the first thermonuclear device with the Mike shot in 1952, but did not have a functional bomb until Bravo in 1954. The RDS-6 was not deployable, but in 1955 the Soviets tested an aircraft deployable thermonuclear bomb.

<sup>103</sup> *Pravda*, Mar. 12, 1953. In Gordon S. Barrass, *The Great Cold War: A Journey Through the Hall of Mirrors* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 81.

the guise of peaceful ends. Khrushchev believed that the international class struggle was still underway, but that individual parties abroad could “contribute by its own strategy to shifting the world balance toward socialism.”<sup>104</sup> Moscow was to serve as “the dogmatic authority of a leading party,” lest the international movement “lose sight of the common revolutionary goal.”<sup>105</sup> Khrushchev, therefore, sought to lead this movement through revolutionary rhetoric while coming to terms with the devastating potential of thermonuclear war.

The first aspect of the message to the masses continued in the Marxist-Leninist mode of a “struggle for peace” against the “aggressive, warlike, and militaristic nature of capitalism.”<sup>106</sup> This message catered to communists, the working class, political and ethnic minorities, and other potential communists worldwide. The thrust of this message was to portray the United States and NATO as capitalist fat cats, pursuing foreign policy objectives at the expense of the downtrodden. U.S. nuclear policy was portrayed as a means to bully the oppressed peoples of the world to feed the insatiable economic appetites of the capitalist that controlled western democracies.<sup>107</sup>

The second aspect of Soviet public diplomacy was the concept of peaceful coexistence. This message was used by Khrushchev repeatedly, starting in 1955. The peaceful coexistence message targeted those neutral to communism as well as those who were anti-communist, but potentially against NATO or other aspects of U.S. foreign policy. This message attempted to portray the Soviet Union as the good guy on the international stage and often presented the idea of decreasing international tension as the Soviet objective.<sup>108</sup> Although peaceful coexistence strayed from the Marxist-Leninist tradition in that it de-emphasized the inevitable conflict between communism and capitalism, Soviet actions during this time continued to prepare for such a conflict.

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<sup>104</sup> Timmermann, *Decline of the World Communist Movement*, 37.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>106</sup> Frederick C. Barghoorn, *Soviet Foreign Propaganda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), 87.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-88.

During these early years of the Cold War, the United States enjoyed a considerable technological advantage over the Soviets. Furthermore, the rearmament of West Germany in 1955 fueled Soviet insecurities as their perceived conventional advantage over the west was called into question. Despite the genuine belief by both Eisenhower and Khrushchev that their counterparts did not want an open conflict following the Geneva Summit in fall of 1955, both sides continued to take actions that reinvigorated insecurities. Khrushchev attended the summit to ease tensions and revamp the Soviet image in the West but felt his efforts went unrecognized by the United States. Likewise, Eisenhower did not want to embrace the Soviet leader entirely for fear of legitimizing his Peace Offensive and losing some of the neutral nations.<sup>109</sup>

During the 1950s, Khrushchev faced the challenge of remaining on equal footing with the United States, despite a lack of nuclear parity, in order to limit the potential of a rearmed Western Germany and maintain the Soviet sphere of influence. In 1956 the Soviets reported the first successful test of a ballistic missile. Unfortunately for Khrushchev, this technological advancement did not translate to the public diplomacy victory for which he had hoped as the United States largely ignored the achievement. The following year, however, the Soviets achieved a major technological and propaganda victory with the launch of Sputnik, the world's first manmade satellite. The October 4, 1957, event was "a grave defeat for the United States"<sup>110</sup> in the eyes of the public already acclimated to the burgeoning space race. Although Soviet capabilities still lagged behind those of their rivals, western perceptions were forever changed, as was the ideological landscape of the Cold War; U.S. fears of the Soviets became the top public concern.<sup>111</sup> Most specifically, Sputnik raised the real possibility that the Soviet Union could achieve the means to build and deploy nuclear warheads that could reach U.S. soil.

At the same time, Khrushchev's campaign continued to spread its message in hopes of leveraging the perceived nuclear capability to reach Soviet foreign policy goals.

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<sup>109</sup> Barrass, *The Great Cold War*, 101-4.

<sup>110</sup> Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The Long Entanglement: NATO's First 50 Years* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 66-7.

<sup>111</sup> Barrass, *The Great Cold War*, 113-115.

TASS, the Soviet press agency, was the agency primarily responsible for overseas press correspondence through the 1950s. TASS correspondents served as both propagandists and information gatherers abroad. Such publications as *Pravda*, *The Moscow Times*, and the *New Times* produced pro-Soviet publications in English to be distributed in the West under the supervision of TASS.<sup>112</sup>

Khrushchev also sought to exercise public diplomacy through more modern means of communication. By 1958, Radio Moscow was broadcasting more than 350 hours of programming daily in various languages around the world, spreading the peace offensive.<sup>113</sup> These broadcasts encouraged the growth of socialist institutions, promoted working-class political activism, and discredited capitalist adversaries.<sup>114</sup>

Then in 1959 following a visit to the United States, Khrushchev embraced the opportunity to address the American public on national television with a speech titled “Nations Should Live as Good Neighbors.” In the speech, Khrushchev promoted the Soviet people’s “wish to live in peace and friendship with you”<sup>115</sup> but warned that “forces that obstruct an improvement in the relations between our countries and a relaxation in international tension are still influential in the United States.”<sup>116</sup> The first topic Khrushchev tackled in the speech was disarmament; he pointed out the astronomical sums being poured into the U.S. defense industry. The Soviet leader then discussed the numerous benefits of the Soviet society, including the true democratic nature of socialism, and the universal benefits of education, health care, pensions, and housing in

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<sup>112</sup> Richard Shultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatsia: The Strategy of Soviet Disinformation* (New York: Berkley Books, 1986), 45-8; Barghoorn, *Soviet Foreign Propaganda*, 247; Andre Richter, “The Russian Press After Perestroika,” *The Canadian Journal of Communication*, 20:1 (1995). <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/viewArticle/842/748> The press function of TASS remains in place today as the Information Telegraph Agency of Russia (ITAR). ITAR-TASS News Agency is a state funded media source focused on international audiences. <http://en.itar-tass.com/>

<sup>113</sup> *The Voice of America*, 1959. *John Peter Groethe Collection*, Box 1, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Archives.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Nikita Khrushchev, Washington, September 27<sup>th</sup> 1959. In “Nations Should Live as Good Neighbours! Nikita Khrushchev’s Address on United States Television, Washington, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1959,” *Soviet Booklet No. 56* (London: APN, 1959), Hoover Library, 3.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

such a society. In one of the more telling passages, he admonishes his viewers that Soviet industry will overtake the U.S. productive forces in the coming years—as it would have done so sooner if not for the devastation of WWII. Ultimately Khrushchev used the unprecedented platform to promote peaceful coexistence while simultaneously touting the superiority of the Soviet system as a subtle warning against the current U.S. course.<sup>117</sup> It was classic *dezinformatsia*, in the 1950s terminology—though after 1960, the term “active measures” was preferred to describe the “overt and covert techniques for influencing events and behavior in, and the actions of, foreign countries.”<sup>118</sup>

Khrushchev’s U.S. viewers recognized these efforts as propaganda—and tended to see the west lagging on this front, as well. The same week as the premier’s visit, *The New York Times Magazine* ran an article titled “Why Russia is Ahead in Propaganda.”<sup>119</sup> The article faulted the U.S. approach for its naïve and simplistic overreliance on presenting the truth as a means to compel people to make the right decision, while the Soviet approach demonstrates a “firm grasp of the protean nature modern propaganda,” which “has enabled them to coordinate their diverse policies and operations to achieve the optimum results.”<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, the article links the timing of Khrushchev’s visit with a recent Soviet lunar probe as an example how modern “propaganda of words reinforces—and is in turn reinforced by—the propaganda of deeds.”<sup>121</sup> The article notes that communist strategic doctrine ties war, economics, politics, and diplomacy together to exploit cultural and ideological perceptions of the West. Ultimately, “American propaganda attempts to persuade,” the author notes, but “Soviet psychological strategy attempts to condition.”<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid. 12-18.

<sup>118</sup> Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 2.

<sup>119</sup> Robert Strausz-Hupe, “Why Russia is Ahead in Propaganda,” *New York Times Magazine*, September 27, 1959. *John Peter Groethe Collection*, Box 1 Folder 3, Hoover Institution Archives.

<sup>120</sup> Strausz-Hupe, “Why Russia is Ahead in Propaganda,” 15.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

On the other hand, although the article praises the Soviet advantage in the propaganda realm, the acknowledgement of Soviet words and actions as propaganda calls into question the effectiveness of Khrushchev's propaganda campaign. Information perceived to be propaganda lacked credibility, regardless of any factual support imbedded in the message. By this time, most of Khrushchev's intended audience knew that his approach "involved a large measure of bluster and bluff, which in fact worked dangerously against his desired end."<sup>123</sup> The bluff took the form of using Sputnik, missile development, and atmospheric testing to "give the impression of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capability sufficient to counteract America's superiority."<sup>124</sup> This ruse worked sufficiently throughout the 1950s when the U.S. lacked the capability to verify the Soviet arsenal, but broke down as U.S. long-range reconnaissance capabilities revealed a more accurate picture of the Soviet nuclear program.<sup>125</sup>

The same problem attached to TASS. The Novosti Press Agency (APN) was created in 1961 to overcome the challenges of TASS's "blatant association with the Soviet government."<sup>126</sup> Despite the thinly masked ties to the state, Khrushchev sought legitimacy in international eyes with APN because of its alleged independence. APN was designed to "sell the Soviet Union in consumer-oriented markets abroad."<sup>127</sup> The APN produced series of booklets available by subscription or individual sale abroad. These booklets had titles such as "Communism Creates Brotherhood," "Disarmament: The Road to a World without War," and "Communism Means Peace." The inscription on the opening page of such publications had the motto of the APN, "Information for a world in

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<sup>123</sup> Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy*, 345.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Barrass, *The Great Cold War*, 390; Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy*, 345-7.

<sup>126</sup> Jennifer Turner, *Reinventing the Soviet Self: Media and Social Change in the Former Soviet Union* (London: Praeger, 1995), 19.

<sup>127</sup> Turner, *Reinventing the Soviet Self*, 19.

need of mutual understanding.”<sup>128</sup> Although these titles focus on various aspects of the ideological struggle, they share a common message vilifying capitalism and promoting peaceful coexistence.

“Communism Means Peace” points toward capitalism as the root of the Napoleonic wars, the Crimean war, the Spanish American war, and both world wars.<sup>129</sup> It also lambasts the growth of the U.S. war industry following the formation of NATO and the dangerous idea of preventative war, but offers socialism as an “antithesis” to imperialism and a “rejection of war.”<sup>130</sup> The tract acknowledges the struggle between Soviet Russia and the West as “expressing the class difference of these two social systems, the radical differences in their ideologies” and recognizes “every country is free to adhere to its own views,” but “some countries should not impose their views on other countries by means of war, or the force of arms.”<sup>131</sup> The publication takes this point one step further when it rejects “all attempts made by certain representatives of Western countries to utilize the ideological contradictions of the two systems in order to justify the preparations for a military clash.”<sup>132</sup> The Soviet message is that the current track of the U.S. will lead to war, and the world must choose between peaceful coexistence and thermonuclear war.<sup>133</sup> The publication closes with a reminder that the Twenty-Second Congress Party Congress declared the “main aim of its foreign policy to be not only the prevention of a world war, but to exclude war for ever from the life of society.”<sup>134</sup>

The disconnect between the Soviet nuclear program and the public diplomacy stance of the late 1950s and early 1960s demonstrated the deep-seated problem with the Soviet’s superpower status: a lack of resources to support its perceived or aspired place in

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<sup>128</sup>N. Nikolsky, “Communism Means Peace,” *Soviet Booklet 95* (London: Novosti, 1962). Hoover Library.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-13.

<sup>131</sup> Nikolsky, “Communism Means Peace,” 22.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-3.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

the international order. Khrushchev attempted to overcome this shortfall through the Peace Offensive and the propagandistic demonstrations of Soviet capabilities. However, with the gap between the reality of capabilities and the need to maintain superpower status, “the temptation was always present to make up for this weakness by some rash expedient.”<sup>135</sup> This expedient took the form of moving medium and intermediate range missiles to Cuba, and the resulting crisis of October 1962.<sup>136</sup>

### C. REACHING STRATEGIC PARITY

After 1962, the Soviet message focused on Western militarism, aggression, and opposition to negotiations. This switch from promoting the positive message of the Soviet Union to focusing on the negative traits of the west came along with an international shift toward talks of limiting the arms race, reducing nuclear testing, and a brief period of eased tensions after the near catastrophe of the Cuban missile crisis.<sup>137</sup>

The Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 highlighted efforts to decrease tensions following the brinkmanship of the Cuban missile crisis.<sup>138</sup> Efforts in the West to “emphasize that nuclear war would be the ultimate disaster”<sup>139</sup> seemed to embrace some of the logic of Khrushchev’s Peace Offensive. However, the potential to capitalize on any mutual understanding gained from the crisis disappeared with the assassination of President Kennedy, and the subsequent regime change in the Soviet Union the following year.

Although Khrushchev may have hoped finally to reap dividends from his aggressive Peace Offensive and strategic deception campaigns of the 1950s and early 1960s against the U.S. imperialists, his successor inherited a “Soviet state humiliated by

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<sup>135</sup> Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy*, 346

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 345-7

<sup>137</sup> Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 49-51, 54-56.

<sup>138</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 231.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*



the rival superpower.”<sup>140</sup> Khrushchev may have genuinely attempted to demilitarize the Cold War and “reduce his country’s bloated defense establishment” but the result was “not only redundant but also counterproductive.”<sup>141</sup> Leonid Brezhnev headed a regime that allowed for renewed military influence on foreign policy and the propaganda machine continued to wage war against the west.<sup>142</sup>

The *New Times* and *Pravda* continued campaigns came now to emphasize the theme of western aggressiveness. From 1967 to 1969, the theme was central to 60 percent of the international relations articles. Although this rate was down from 75 percent in the period of 1960–1962, it still was the dominant theme in such media.<sup>143</sup> The U.S. provided fuel for arguments about the aggressiveness and militarism of the west with Vietnam, and the Soviet propaganda campaign began to pursue a strategy of *kombinatsia*, the combination of various issues with general themes. For example, the south Asian conventional conflict thus could be lumped into the same category of nuclear armaments in the general theme of U.S. aggression and militarism.<sup>144</sup>

Another target of Soviet propaganda in the 1960s was U.S. cooperation with so-called West German revanchists. This message painted a picture of aggressive West Germans vying for European supremacy and pursuing control of nuclear weapons. NATO’s nuclear strategy also was portrayed as an effort to turn Western Europe into a battleground and fundamentally “endangered the very existence of Europe.”<sup>145</sup>

Until the late 1960s, Soviet nuclear posture was largely based on strategic deception and propaganda. Soviets believed that the U.S. policy of massive retaliation would lead to the inevitability of general nuclear war. However, with NATO’s shift to

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<sup>140</sup> Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy*, 341.

<sup>141</sup> Vojtech Mastny, “Imagining War in Europe,” *War Plans and Alliances in the Cold War: Threat Perceptions in the East and West*, eds. Vojtech Mastny, Sven G. Holtsmark, and Andreas Wenger (New York: Routledge, 2006), 25.

<sup>142</sup> Freedman, *Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 254.

<sup>143</sup> Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 49, 60.

<sup>144</sup> Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 60.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-6.

flexible response in 1967 the Soviets envisioned a different type of conflict should war erupt.<sup>146</sup> This shift in perception and the subsequent willingness to discuss arms treaties productively is largely a result of achievements of the Soviet ICBM program. The development of the R-36 and UR-100 missiles as well as the 667A submarines gave the Soviet's a level of strategic parity with the United States that allowed for limited cooperation in addressing nuclear issues.<sup>147</sup> Only when this nuclear equilibrium was reached were the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) and Non-Proliferation Treaty possible.<sup>148</sup>

#### **D. CONCLUSION: ATOMIC PROPAGANDA AND RUSSIAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

The ideological struggle and the nuclear arms race cannot be viewed as separate chapters in history, but are linked in the definitive struggle since World War II. Led by this relationship, the propaganda efforts of the two rivals reflect nuclear strategies. In the Soviet example, willingness to earnestly pursue arms limitation talks was not possible until a perceived equilibrium was achieved in strategic nuclear forces. Although the message of Soviet propaganda shifted during the first twenty years of the Cold War, its presence was never in question. The importance of propaganda and public diplomacy was not lost on Soviet leaders. Hailing from the lineage of the Russian Revolutionaries, the value of mobilizing the masses and popular support was central to Soviet strategy. The failure of the Soviet public diplomacy campaign lay in a lack of understanding of its American audience. Although freedom of speech made the audience easier to reach, the transparency also valued in the West prevented much of the Soviet information from being seen as anything beyond overt propaganda. Worse than simply being a foreign opinion, the Soviet methods were viewed as dangerous and subversive.

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<sup>146</sup> Frede P. Jensen, "The Warsaw Pact's Special Target: Planning the Seizure of Denmark," *War Plans and Alliances in the Cold War: Threat Perceptions in the East and West*, eds. Vojtech Mastny, Sven G. Holtsmark, and Andreas Wenger (New York: Routledge, 2006), 105.

<sup>147</sup> Podvig, *Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces*, 6-7.

<sup>148</sup> Stephen M. Younger, *The Bomb: A New History* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 137-44; Freedman, *Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 256, 318, 338-41;

Rather than achieving any positive results for the Soviets, Moscow's propaganda campaign created an environment in which the Western public was primed and ready to consume U.S. propaganda. The fear caused by the Soviet demonstrations of Sputnik, atmospheric testing, and the ICBM program far outweighed the potential good will sought after in the Peace Offensive. Throughout the 1950s and into the first half of the 1960s, Western citizens, particularly those in the United States, had an up swell of patriotism, which can, at least in part, be attributed to the Soviet threat. The underlying theme of such patriotic movements was "the need to grid for protracted conflict against the communist world."<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, the Soviet efforts helped the dominant voice of U.S. internal critique to shift from scientists who had "sought to check the spread of weapons of destruction," to those "concerned instead with refining the nation's strategic approach to make it more effective."<sup>150</sup> Ultimately, the Peace Offensive did more harm than good for the Soviets. America developed heightened popular resolve to defeat the Soviets and became a society increasingly militarized in the name of patriotic duty.

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<sup>149</sup> Fried, *The Russians are Coming!*, 91. 88-98.

<sup>150</sup> Winkler, *Life Under a Cloud* 166-7.

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#### IV. UNITED FRONT: OFFICIAL NATO COMMUNIQUÉS ON NUCLEAR ISSUES, 1949–1969

The North Atlantic Treaty is far more than a defensive arrangement. It is an affirmation of the moral and spiritual values which we hold in common. It represents the will of the peoples of the North Atlantic community not only to safeguard their freedom, but to seek increasing fulfillment of it. The central idea of the treaty is not a static one. It is conceived rather in the spirit of growth, of development, of progress.<sup>151</sup>

The official communiqués of NATO during the Cold War reflect a managed agenda of balancing the Alliance's deterrence and defense posture with its interest in dialogue and negotiations. Although these communiqués were calculated strategic communications for world leaders, they also were open source documents available to offer the public insights on NATO strategy and garner support for the Alliance both in its member states and abroad. As such, the communiqués, when viewed in light of international events of the 1950s and 1960s, offer insight on leaders' perceptions of the mass public and reflect their intentions to gain support on nuclear strategy.

As implied by Dean Acheson's statement, NATO was created to foster the community, which "is a growing and evolving body of people leading a common life under some form of shared social and political organization."<sup>152</sup> Such an evolution is evident in the first twenty years of NATO with regard to attitudes toward nuclear warfare. This period can be divided into two distinct phases with different trends in the tone of the communiqués. From 1949 to 1962, the communiqués emphasize establishing an adequate force through U.S.-led nuclear efforts and the necessity of both a nuclear arsenal and political and economic cooperation in meeting the Soviet threat. The communiqués of this time reflect geo-political developments, including the formation of NATO, the establishment of West German armed forces, and the founding of the Warsaw Pact, as well as a response to the Soviet Peace Offensive and strategic deception

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<sup>151</sup> Dean Acheson, Department of State Bulletin (1 October 1951), quoted in Ian Q. R. Thomas, *The Promise of Alliance: NATO and the Political Imagination* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 33.

<sup>152</sup> Thomas, *The Promise of Alliance*, 33.

campaign. The Cuban Missile Crisis marked a shift in the tone to one of reassurance balanced with disarmament and nonproliferation goals, and this continues through the beginning of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) in 1969 and the entry into force of the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1970.

#### **A. INTEGRATION AND COOPERATION: 1949–1962**

The North Atlantic Treaty, signed on 4 April 1949, makes no reference to atomic or nuclear weapons. Article 5 does, however, allow each ally to take such “action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed forces, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.”<sup>153</sup> Following the first meeting of NATO later that year, the official communiqué emphasized the objective of NATO being to “preserve the heritage of freedom and to defend themselves against aggression while emphasizing the desire to live in peace with all governments and all peoples.”<sup>154</sup> The messages of these infant years focus on “the urgent need to strengthen collective defense.”<sup>155</sup> Although there is no specific mention of nuclear weapons, the May 1950 communiqué calls for “balanced collective forces,” which should be “equipped with modern weapons.”<sup>156</sup> This reference clearly alludes to the NATO force structure in which the main contributions of the U.S. would be Strategic Air Power and nuclear weapons and the European nations would contribute the bulk of the ground forces.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty, 4 April 1949.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>154</sup> “Final Communiqué of the First Session of the North Atlantic Council, - (Terms and Reference of Organization),” 17 Sep. 1949.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17117.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17117.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>155</sup> Chairman Acheson, “Final Communiqué - (Integrated military force to be set up under centralized command The Federal Republic of Germany to contribute to defence of Western Europe),” 16-18 Sep 1950. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17159.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17159.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>156</sup> Chairman Acheson, “Final Communiqué,- (Council Deputies established to meet permanently in London - Definition of “balanced collective forces” and of “progressive build-up of defence” - North Atlantic Planning Board for Ocean Shipping established.)” 15-18 May 1950.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17207.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17207.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>157</sup> Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The Long Entanglement: NATO’s First 50 Years* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1999), 59.

The message from NATO reflects early perceptions of the best use of the atomic bomb. General Curtis Lemay, first leader of the U.S. Strategic Air Command (SAC) viewed the bomb as a more robust means of carrying out strategic bombing campaigns similar to those of World War II.<sup>158</sup> The idea of the nuclear bomb as merely a more capable weapon quickly dissolved with the realization of the “super” bomb. The development of the hydrogen bomb solidified the thought that nuclear weapons could no longer be viewed as an augmentation to conventional forces, but required a strategy of their own. Along with the U.S. detonation of the first thermonuclear device with the Ivy Mike Test, 1952 saw the United Kingdom become the third nation to test a nuclear device. Not to be outdone by the U.S. advancements and UK membership in the nuclear club, the Soviets detonated a thermonuclear device of their own in 1953.<sup>159</sup> NATO communiqués reflected the changing strategic environment with the first mention of nuclear weapons in December 1953. In this communiqué, Chairman G. Bidault announced the dual goals of “developing and expediting the peaceful use of atomic energy and bringing together the Powers principally involved in order to seek a solution to the problem of atomic armaments.”<sup>160</sup> Later in the statement Bidault graciously acknowledged President Eisenhower for asking “Congress for authority to provide information on nuclear weapons to NATO Commanders for purposes of NATO military planning.”<sup>161</sup>

These statements had many implications about the early nuclear age. First, the mention of peaceful use and armaments in the same breath indicates efforts by the Alliance to paint atomic technology as both a security issue and a technical marvel to be

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<sup>158</sup> Stephen M. Younger, *The Bomb: A New History* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 47-49.

<sup>159</sup> Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: Kansas University Press, 2006), 153-4; Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, Third Ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 61-4, 74-6; Allan M. Winkler, *Life Under a Cloud: American Anxieties about the Atom* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 76.

<sup>160</sup> Chairman G. Bidault, “Final Communiqué – (Exchange of views on political matters - Long-term defence plans and improvement of quality of NATO defence forces - provision of latest weapons to support defence system - Co-ordination of national civil defense plans),” 14-16 December, 1953. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17365.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17365.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

exploited for the benefit of mankind. Leaders acknowledged that many still feared the potential of “the bomb” and needed to be shown that the atomic age was also a time for advancing society. The second part of the communiqué shows the dominance of the U.S. in any nuclear discussion, and represents the need for the leaders of Alliance states to take part in NATO’s nuclear strategy. The challenge of creating a nuclear alliance in which the burden of nuclear weapons was truly shared, was a major theme during this phase of NATO’s development and one that presently remains a topic of debate.<sup>162</sup>

The 1954 NATO communiqués made no mention of nuclear weapons; however, significant developments in 1955 reasserted the centrality of arms in NATO public diplomacy. Following a miraculous 10-year economic recovery from the devastation of the Second World War, West Germany became a full member of NATO in May 1955. In accordance with the London and Paris Pacts of 1954, the Federal Republic of Germany also embarked on the formation of the Bundeswehr. This development, along with the modernization of NATO forces, heralded an effort to close gap with the Soviet conventional superiority.<sup>163</sup>

The Soviet Union vehemently opposed the establishment of the Bundeswehr and responded with the founding of the Warsaw Pact a week after West Germany joined NATO. Despite this hardening of the divide between East and West Europe, the Geneva Summit of 1955 did offer “genuine détente between the East and West.”<sup>164</sup> Both Eisenhower and Khrushchev recognized that the development of hydrogen weapons furthered convictions that war was an undesirable outcome for all involved, and they believed that both parties were genuine in their desires to avoid war. However, this détente was limited.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> A. Costandina Titus, “The Mushroom Cloud as Kitsch,” *Atomic Culture: How we Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, eds. Scott Zeman and Michael Amundson (Boulder, CO; University Press of Colorado, 2004), 105-9; Michael Rühle, “The Broader Context of NATO’s Nuclear Policy and Posture,” (Rome: NATO Defense College Research Division, January 2013).

<sup>163</sup> Gordon S. Barrass, *The Great Cold War* (California; Stanford University Press, 2009), 101-2.

<sup>164</sup> Kaplan, *The Long Entanglement*, 102-3.

<sup>165</sup> Barrass, *The Great Cold War*, 102-3.



The NATO message following the Geneva Summit clearly indicated suspicion of any Soviet expression of good will. In a September 1955 speech, Lord Ismay, Secretary General of NATO, warned against the ideas that “the development of nuclear weapons has rendered conventional forces obsolete” and made “war impossible because it is so deadly that both sides would be annihilated.”<sup>166</sup> Rather the NATO leader noted the “danger that the free peoples may be lulled into a sense of false security, and that they will succumb to the temptation to relax their efforts which are still essential, if peace is to be preserved.”<sup>167</sup> Ismay’s speech touched on two themes that would dominate NATO’s public diplomacy regarding nuclear weapons in the coming years. First, the balance between conventional forces and nuclear forces was a central issue in the message presented to the public. Second, suspicion of Soviet peace efforts became a prominent feature of public diplomacy for the next five years.

The following year the Committee of Three was set up to take a more holistic approach to the Alliance and wasted no time in addressing mistrust of Soviet public diplomacy. Although the committee was designed to address non-defense issues in NATO, its first message linked the threat of nuclear war to the development of democratic nations:

In a shrinking nuclear world it was wise and timely to bring about a closer association of kindred Atlantic and Western European nations for other than defence purposes alone; ...common cultural traditions, free institutions and democratic concepts which were being challenged, and were marked for destruction by those who challenged them, were things which should also bring the NATO nations closer together, not only for their defence but for their development.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Lord Ismay, Secretary General of NATO, Speech 30 September 1955.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_17455.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_17455.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>167</sup> Lord Ismay, Secretary General of NATO, Speech 30 September 1955.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_17455.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_17455.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>168</sup> “Final Communiqué- The Report of the Committee of Three,” Ch. 1 para. 12. 13 December 1956,  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17481.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17481.htm?selectedLocale=en).

The Committee of Three also noted the importance of developing “progress in education and public understanding.”<sup>169</sup> Undoubtedly this understanding referenced the necessity of fostering public support for NATO policies. This first Committee address noted the “increased Soviet emphasis on non-military or paramilitary methods,” and called for a review “of NATO’s ability to meet effectively the challenge of penetration under the guise of coexistence.”<sup>170</sup> In an effort to meet this challenge the Committee called for increased coordination and development of national information services to counter anti-NATO propaganda. This communiqué not only called on Alliance states to increase their own public communication campaigns, but served as a medium of public diplomacy itself. By noting the duplicity of the Soviet information operations, the communiqué sought to garner public support for NATO and heighten the urgency with which citizens viewed the ideological struggle. NATO public communications in the following years continued to emphasize the Soviet propaganda threat.<sup>171</sup>

Lord Ismay and Chairman Martino’s May 1957 communiqué called Soviet messages of peaceful coexistence and disarmament an effort “to ensure for Soviet forces a monopoly of nuclear weapons on the European continent.”<sup>172</sup> In the same message, the NATO leaders also emphasized “the need for NATO to retain an effective deterrent against aggression, including a powerful shield of land, sea and air forces, to protect the territory of member states.”<sup>173</sup>

The October 1957 launch of Sputnik rocked efforts to combat the Soviet information campaign. Although Sputnik demonstrated Soviet technological achievement, it also forced the warnings of the NATO communiqués to be taken more

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., Ch. 1, para. 15.

<sup>170</sup> “The Report of the Committee of Three,” (13 December 1956), Ch. 1, para. 21.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17481.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17481.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., Ch. V, para 84.

<sup>172</sup> Chairman J. Martino and Lord Ismay, “Final Communiqué - (Reaffirmation of Alliance's right to possess atomic weapons - Decision to intensify the effort to reunify Germany through free elections - Middle East Security),” 2-3 May 1957..  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17554.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17554.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

seriously. P.H. Spaak, then the NATO Secretary General, immediately launched a public diplomacy campaign with addresses to the Imperial Defense College, the Overseas Press Club of New York, and a joint session of the British Parliament and House of Commons between 1 and 6 November.<sup>174</sup>

In his speech to the Imperial Defense College, Spaak described the Soviet forces as “on a war footing.”<sup>175</sup> This circumstance required NATO to “maintain our forces at that level of effectiveness which our commanders consider essential to meet that threat, and equip them with tactical and strategic nuclear weapons.”<sup>176</sup> Spaak repeated this call in his speech to the Overseas Press Club when he called for “the modernisation of all NATO forces,”<sup>177</sup> and “development of certain specific weapons, particularly in the field of missiles, and to provide nuclear power for our forces in Europe.”<sup>178</sup> Before Parliament and the House of Commons the NATO leader again declared it “absolutely essential that we give our forces tactical and strategic nuclear weapons.”<sup>179</sup> Spaak’s efforts to address the fear provoked by Sputnik had a second message alongside the call for increased nuclear capabilities of NATO forces.

The second message in Spaak’s post-Sputnik speeches highlights the difference between the NATO and Soviet approaches to defense spending, specifically the refusal of the West to compromise standards of living for defense industry. In a notable comparison, Spaak stated, “We cannot choose between Sputnik and the washing machine. We must make them both, and we can only make them both if in the Free World as a whole we co-ordinate our efforts to the fullest possible extent.”<sup>180</sup> Spaak again

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<sup>174</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 201.

<sup>175</sup> P.H. Spaak, “Speech to the Imperial Defense College,” 1 Nov. 1957.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_17560.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_17560.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> P.H. Spaak, “Speech before Overseas Press Club of New York,” 1 November 1957.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_17563.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_17563.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Spaak, “Speech to Joint Meeting of Members of Parliament in the House of Commons,” 6 Nov 1957. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_17565.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_17565.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>180</sup> Spaak, “Speech to the Imperial Defense College,” 1 Nov. 1957.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_17560.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_17560.htm?selectedLocale=en)

noted the choice between the washing machine and Sputnik, or more broadly, between security and prosperity, in his speech to the House of Commons and Parliament.<sup>181</sup> By linking the ideological values of the West with the technological and military requirements of the Alliance, NATO's nuclear strategy was portrayed as an extension of the citizens' economic freedom and well-being. Although the Alliance acknowledged Sputnik as a significant achievement, the public message focused on the fundamental differences between Soviet and NATO motivations and means for enhancing military capabilities. Technological advancements in the Alliance would be for the benefit, rather than to the detriment, of the citizens.

The message linking the ideological struggle to technological advancements, vis-à-vis nuclear weapons, was encapsulated in the communiqué following the Paris Summit in December 1957 in which NATO denounced "Soviet tactics of alternating between peace propaganda statements and attempted intimidation by the threat of nuclear attack."<sup>182</sup> Spaak declared the Soviet idea of peaceful coexistence as a propaganda strategy designed to encourage Europeans to "renounce nuclear weapons and missiles and rely on arms of the preatomic age."<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, due to the Soviet actions, "the Council has also decided that intermediate range ballistic missiles will have to be put at the disposal of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe."<sup>184</sup>

The May 1958 communiqué had a slight change of tone with a discussion of steps toward disarmament, starting with "studies and experiments on the technical problems of inspection and control," but such efforts thus far were pursued "in spite of repeated Soviet refusal."<sup>185</sup> The more dominant theme as the Cold War entered the 1960s was the

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<sup>181</sup> Spaak, "Speech to Joint Meeting of Members of Parliament in the House of Commons," 6 Nov 1957. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_17565.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_17565.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>182</sup> P. H. Spaak, Secretary General, Final Communiqué, 16 December 1957. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17551.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17551.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> P.H. Spaak, "Final Communiqué – (Alliance's activities in the context of the international situation - Attention drawn to need for economic cooperation - Discussion of a possible Summit Conference - Hope expressed for expert talks on East West disarmament)," 5-7 May 1958. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17638.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17638.htm?selectedLocale=en).

rejection of the Soviet “formula of ‘peaceful co-existence’ under cover of which attacks continue to be made on individual members of the Alliance.”<sup>186</sup> Again in the Final Communiqué of 1961 the Allies noted that “The Soviet Union, while professing to negotiate in good faith, must for many months past have been secretly preparing the longest series of nuclear tests yet carried out, culminating in the largest nuclear explosion yet known.”<sup>187</sup>

By and large, the first decade of communiqués reflect a “recognition that NATO was on trial before a global audience comprised of potential enemies, as well as potential allies,”<sup>188</sup> In order to effectively reach the goal of integrated defense centered around nuclear weapons, the communiqués balanced discussions of this technology with “broad based appeal to higher values,”<sup>189</sup> such as the messages from the Committee of Three and the sputnik versus washing machine illustration. In doing so, NATO squared the circle of garnering support from a war weary public for a strategy reliant on the threat of apocalyptic war. As the 1960s came to a close, NATO faced the challenge of “maintaining Western unity in the absence of a compelling need to maintain unity.”<sup>190</sup> The NATO communiqués entering the 1960s demonstrate a heightened awareness of the ongoing ideological struggle as a means of addressing this challenge. NATO showed more concern over the Soviet demonstrations of technological might, such as Sputnik, atmospheric testing, and ballistic missile development, than the words coming from the Kremlin. The possibility of arms control was discussed, but only as an opportunity to show Soviet duplicity. The nature of the North Atlantic Community and the public diplomacy landscape continued to evolve when brinkmanship truly reached the breaking

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<sup>186</sup>P. H. Spaak, “Final Communiqué – (Continuation of preparation for the Summit Conference - Satisfaction with the system of continuous Allied consultation),” 2-4 May 1960.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26517.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26517.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>187</sup> D. U. Stikker, “Final Communiqué,- (German question, particularly Berlin following the erection of the Wall - Soviet refusal to hold talks on disarmament regretted - NATO threatens no one - Greek and Turkish development programs),” (13-15 December 1961).  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26552.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26552.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>188</sup> Thomas, *The Promise of Alliance*, 35.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 55.

point in October 1962. The Soviet gamble in Cuba brought the possibility of nuclear war closer to reality than at any other time, and the tone of NATO communiqués reflected this change starting in December 1962.<sup>191</sup>

## **B. BACK FROM THE ABYSS: NATO COMMUNIQUÉS 1963–1970**

The December 1962 communiqué noted that disaster was avoided only by the “the firmness and restraint of the United States, supported by the Alliance and other free nations.”<sup>192</sup> However, with this near miss came a growing desire for increased sharing of information and decision making regarding nuclear weapons, as well as an emphasis on limiting the escalating arms race.

The May 1963 communiqué highlighted the steps taken to organize nuclear forces, including “broader participation by officers of NATO member countries” and “fuller information to national authorities, both political and military.”<sup>193</sup> Again in December 1963 the only mention of nuclear weapons noted decisions “regarding fuller information on nuclear questions for national authorities and broader participation by member countries in the organization and operational planning functions of SACEUR’s nuclear forces.”<sup>194</sup> These efforts resulted in the establishment of the Nuclear Defense Affairs Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) in 1966. The reports from the

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<sup>191</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy’s Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 218.

<sup>192</sup> D. U. Strikker, “Final Communiqué” - (Cuban missile crisis - Berlin - Political Consultation to be intensified disarmament - Triennial Review - Nuclear problems - Defence Ministers meeting on 15th December),” 13-15 Dec 1962.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26579.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26579.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>193</sup> D. U. Strikker, “Final Communiqué, - (Berlin - Cuba - Laos - Disarmament - Political Consultation - Organization of nuclear forces assigned to SACEUR - Balance between conventional and nuclear arms - Defence problems of Greece).” 22-24 May 1963.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26606.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26606.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>194</sup> D. U. Strikker, “Final Communiqué” - (President Johnson’s pledge to support Alliance - Faith in the principles of the U.N. Charter - International situation reviewed - Developments in S-E Asia and the Caribbean - Questions regarding nuclear and other forces- Western economic development – Mi),” 16-17 Dec. 1963. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26603.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26603.htm?selectedLocale=en)

NPG in 1967 and 1968 focused on the adequacy of the current state of NATO nuclear forces, a distinct change from earlier NATO communiqués which called for additional nuclear forces in the NATO structure.<sup>195</sup>

The second theme to take precedence in the post-Cuban missile crisis period was increased attention to disarmament and limiting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Although these topics received limited attention prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis, they became prominent during the 1960s. In the December 1964 Communiqué, D. U. Strikker noted the “efforts to arrive at agreements in the field of disarmament,” and “the importance of avoiding the dissemination of nuclear weapons.”<sup>196</sup> In May 1965, the only mention of nuclear arms was in the context of the “press for active negotiations to achieve measures of disarmament under effective international control” and the importance of “preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.”<sup>197</sup> This trend continued in the 1966 and 1967 communiqués, and in 1968, M. Brosio went so far as to endorse

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<sup>195</sup> “Final Communiqué,- (Declaration on Germany - East- West relations - Outer Space Disarmament - Economic questions and Kennedy Round - Resolution on Technological Co-operation - Aid to Greece and Turkey- Cyprus "watching brief" - Broad analysis of international development),” 15-16 Dec 1966; [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26668.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26668.htm?selectedLocale=en);

“Final Communiqué’- (First meeting of the NPG - Review of the strategic nuclear threat - Discussion of tactical nuclear forces - Atomic demolition munitions discussed - Future work program agreed),” 6-7 April 1967; [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26706.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26706.htm?selectedLocale=en);

“Notes from NPG Meeting- (Possible use of atomic demolition munitions - Possible tactical use of nuclear weapons in the Central and Southern regions of ACE - Anti-ballistic missile defence - National participation in military nuclear planning),” 29 Sep 1967;

[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26694.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26694.htm?selectedLocale=en);

“Final Communiqué- (Anti-ballistic missile defence - Studies concerning tactical use of nuclear weapons),” 18-19 April 1968).

[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26733.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26733.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>196</sup> D. U. Stikker, “Final Communiqué’- (East-West relations - State of the Alliance to be examined - Berlin and Germany - Cohesion of member states - Disarmament - Strategic questions - Military and economic problems of Greece and Turkey Cyprus "watching brief" - Civil emergency planning),” 15-17 Dec. 1964. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26618.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26618.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>197</sup> M. Brosio, “Final Communiqué’- (Causes of tension - Progress of political consultation - Situations outside the NATO area - Cyprus "watching brief" - United Nations Disarmament - Defence Ministers to meet in June - Three-Power Declaration on Germany),” 11-12 May 1965. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26648.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26648.htm?selectedLocale=en);

“the hope expressed by Ministers of the Nuclear Planning Group that progress could be made in discussions with the Soviet Union towards a limitation of the strategic nuclear arms race.”<sup>198</sup>

As the 1960s came to a close, the majority of references to nuclear arms were in the context of disarmament and quelling the escalating arms race. Communiqués reflected an acceptance of NATO’s nuclear forces and focused instead on easing tensions. Rather than paint the picture of an enemy, Soviet actions such as those in Berlin in 1961 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 were allowed to speak for themselves. The change in focus of public diplomacy reflected a changing international environment in which the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, The Non-Proliferation Treaty, and an age of détente would be possible entering the 1970s.

### **C. NATO COMMUNIQUÉS AS PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS OF NUCLEAR STRATEGY**

The early years of the Atomic Era coincided with a communications revolution with radio and television broadcasts reaching larger audiences worldwide. With the communications revolution, came an increased emphasis on public diplomacy, continuing a trend from the 19th century in which the opinion of the democratic masses had increasing importance on the formation of strategy. Following the Cuban Missile Crisis, there was a distinct shift in NATO’s presentation of nuclear issues to the public. Members of the Alliance continued to require the assurance of the ultimate security guarantee, but demanded more information and influence over nuclear strategy.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> “Final Communiqué’ - (Defence Planning Committee reviews force goals - Infrastructure to be continued - NATO flanks - Reservists - Nuclear defence affairs),” 10 May 1968; [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26730.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26730.htm?selectedLocale=en);

“Final Communiqué- (Declaration on Germany - East- West relations - Outer Space Disarmament - Economic questions and Kennedy Round - Resolution on Technological Co-operation - Aid to Greece and Turkey- Cyprus "watching brief" - Broad analysis of international development),” 15-16 Dec 1966; [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26668.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26668.htm?selectedLocale=en);

“Final Communiqué’ - (First meeting of the NPG - Review of the strategic nuclear threat - Discussion of tactical nuclear forces - Atomic demolition munitions discussed - Future work program agreed),” 06-07 April 1967. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26706.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26706.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>199</sup> Paul Gordon Lauren, Gordon A. Craig, and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Challenges of Our Time*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 271-2.



These demands still exist in NATO today. The reshaping of the Alliance following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the failure to prevent the atrocities in the Balkans in the 1990s, and the tensions arising following 9/11 and the economic crisis of the late 2000s have all shifted the focus on NATO away from nuclear weapons. However, as NATO continues to grow into the 21st century, nuclear deterrence remains the ultimate guarantee of sovereignty, and the presence of nuclear weapons, albeit technologically dated, in member states holds tremendous geopolitical importance and serve to reassure Allies of the United States commitment to Article Five of the Treaty. The presentations of NATO nuclear strategy to the public will remain important in determining the future importance of the Alliance.

NATO communiqués will continue to serve as a unified message to citizens and leaders of Allies and adversary nations, and they must continue to walk the line between assurance and deterrence. These messages offer insight to the strategic mindset of NATO leaders and serve to gain public support in an era of challenging fiscal change. One potential threat to the NATO deterrent is the strength of the nuclear taboo, developed over time “in part against the preference of the United States.”<sup>200</sup> This taboo can be seen as both beneficial and detrimental to NATO security aims. On the one hand, stigmatizing nuclear weapons furthers the aims of the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and legitimizes efforts to punish those seeking nuclear weapons. On the other hand, the taboo places international pressure on members of the nuclear club to take steps to show good faith in decreasing nuclear arsenals in accordance with Article Six of the NPT.<sup>201</sup> Such pressures are increased when leaders make bold statements, such as those by President Obama in Prague in 2009 when he iterated “America’s commitment to seek the peace and security

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<sup>200</sup> Nina Tannenwald, “Stigmatizing the Bomb: Origins of the Nuclear Taboo,” *International Security*, Volume 29, Issue 4, Spring 2005, 7.  
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/ins/summary/v029/29.4tannenwald.html>

<sup>201</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency, “Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons,” 22 April 1970. <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/Others/infcirc140.pdf>

of a world without nuclear weapons.”<sup>202</sup> Although President Obama hedged this by noting the long timeline of such a goal, such statements nonetheless place tension on the fabric that binds NATO.

Another challenge to the NATO deterrent is the ambivalence of many people toward the role of nuclear weapons. During the Atomic Age, nuclear issues remained at the center of public debate. Citizens of the West lived in the shadow of the bomb and discussions of nuclear strategy and nuclear war were an important aspect of public discourse where experts devoted significant time to studying current issues and debates on the topic. The topic was pushed to the periphery during the second half of the cold war, despite the arms race’s continued buildup into the 1980s. This trend has the potential to create a world of leaders devoid of critical thought on issues of nuclear deterrence. Although considering all contingencies is an impossible task, such an important aspect of international security should not go unconsidered and the nuclear debate cannot be relegated strictly to the pursuit of non-proliferation and disarmament goals.<sup>203</sup>

The Second Nuclear Age has created a “more complex nuclear geometry”<sup>204</sup> in which proliferation has spread to North Korea and likely will spread to Iran in the not so distant future. In this environment, “the rationale advanced for nuclear deterrence by governments may have decisive role in sustaining such policies- or undermining them.”<sup>205</sup> In order to ensure NATO and the U.S. maintain an appropriate nuclear strategy

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<sup>202</sup> Barak Obama, “Remarks of President Obama: Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic,” Office of the Press Secretary, 5 April 2009. [http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered)

<sup>203</sup> David Yost, “The Delegitimization of Nuclear Deterrence?,” *Armed Forces and Society*, Summer 1990, 487-508. Dr. Yost cites the development of nuclear ambivalence by the general public developing from the early 1950s through the 1970s. Noted is the exception of (then) West German citizens overwhelming rejection of nuclear deterrence. His emphasis is on the changing views of political elites in Western Europe and the United States. He astutely notes the potential impact of such views may not lead to abandonment of nuclear weapons, but rather such trends “could make necessary force modernization more difficult and degrade the credibility of the employment threats on which deterrence depends.” (497) Furthermore he notes “nuclear-disarmament goals may be inconsistent with military security requirements.” (497).

<sup>204</sup> Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes, eds., *Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age: Power, Ambition, and the Ultimate Weapon* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 3.

<sup>205</sup> Yost, “Delegitimization of Nuclear Deterrence,” 505.

for possible nuclear threats, leadership must “be increasingly obliged to articulate and defend more general security rationales for nuclear capabilities (such as war prevention and political stabilization) and to participate in far reaching dialogues regarding the ethical, operational, arms control, and international political-order issues associated with nuclear deterrence policies.”<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

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## **V. STRADDLING THE SPECTRUM OF VIOLENCE: WINNING NUCLEAR CONFLICT WITH IDEAS**

The unique challenge of the Cold War was balancing an ideological struggle between the West and the Soviet Union with the undeniable potential for the most extreme violence made possible with the advent of nuclear technology. When seen from today's perspective after more than a decade of irregular conflict and a deteriorating international system, this technology has proven to be the ultimate guarantee of sovereignty and security, however, throughout its history policy makers have been aware that use of the bomb would require "skilful propaganda and political measures"<sup>207</sup> in order to avoid the counterproductive results of neutralism, pacifism or outright surrender. As demonstrated by the U.S., Soviet, and NATO, attempts discussed in this thesis, there are various ways to influence public opinion in such an environment. In each example state leadership sought to shape citizens' views on warfare during the early atomic era in order to garner the support necessary to carry out an expensive strategy which required a tremendous amount of faith from the increasingly important political masses.

### **A. MOBILIZING THE MASSES: PUBLIC OPINION AND STRATEGY**

In the West, the desired public opinion was conceived from the 200-year process of development of Michael Howard's liberal conscience and its relation to the political nature of war in pluralistic politics.<sup>208</sup> Howard offers an explanation for this seemingly incongruous balance between the ideological support for freedom and democracy and the threat of catastrophic war. In his landmark piece of the late Vietnam era, *War and the Liberal Conscience*, Howard posits that American liberal conscience of the 1950s "could understand and support either a just war or a perpetual peace, and it appreciated that the former might be necessary to achieve the latter." Furthermore, "It had no time for any

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<sup>207</sup> Freedman, *Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* 53. As Freedman notes, this concept was present in 1948 war plans.

<sup>208</sup> Michael Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1978).

shifts or manoeuvres, any deals or compromises, that might lie between the two.”<sup>209</sup> The examples of propaganda and public diplomacy in this thesis present a world constantly teetering between these two poles.

The images from the official mass persuasion of *The Big Picture* and other programs from the era show a nation ready to wage war, but always in “the framework of a new world of peace under law.”<sup>210</sup> Episodes such as “The Common Defense” and “The Sharper Sword and the Stronger Shield” present the military as “the posse comitatus, enforcing the rule of law against the malefactors and their associates.”<sup>211</sup> From this perspective, the landscape of the early atomic age is truly the culmination of a “story of the efforts of good men to abolish war but only succeeding in making it more terrible.”<sup>212</sup> That is, more or less in conformity with the liberal conscience, and not in some wrong-headed glorification of war, violence and warriors unhinged from state and law. U.S. citizen embraced the need for vigilance and militarization due to a collective liberal identity in which freedom and democracy were values worth sacrificing especially in the face of a totalitarian enemy.

Another, quite different perspective of the role of the citizen in warfare comes from Carl Schmitt. In *The Concept of the Political*, violence and politics are one in the same. At the heart of man’s existence is the political entity, the state, which, “as an essentially political entity belongs the *jus belli*, i.e., the real possibility of deciding in a concrete situation upon the enemy and the ability to fight him with the power emanating from the entity.”<sup>213</sup> The state is formed by people consenting to fight and to die for its existence, and therefore has the authority to “demand from its own members the readiness to die and unhesitatingly kill enemies.”<sup>214</sup> This perspective rationalizes the

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>210</sup> Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience*, 117.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>213</sup> Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political: Expanded Edition*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 45.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 46.

propaganda of the nuclear era as a means to prepare citizens for such an outcome. It hardly needs to be said that Schmitt later became a Nazi, and his point of view was intensely anti liberal, anti-American, and totalitarian.

## **B. THE VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDE**

Although the world of today does not hold the clear lines of demarcation as the Cold War era with focuses being on non-state actors, counterinsurgency operations, and next generation warfare, one should not look back on this era with too much nostalgia. Russia remains the most capable nuclear state other than the United States. An assessment of the historic tendency of the strategic communication efforts of the world's second largest nuclear power offers value to the current strategic context. The strategic deception campaign and complimentary Peace Offensive of the 1950s and 1960s put Soviet Russia in a position to attempt a daring move in 1962 which, fortunately, was resolved without violence. The potential for similar miscalculations and miscommunications, fueled by propaganda and inconsistent public diplomacy, remain a grave threat to geopolitical stability.

Furthermore, historic ambitions for great power status and a quest for strategic parity do not disappear overnight. The motives behind the most recent Russian escapades in Crimea are open to considerable debate, but the military action is undoubtedly being coupled with a propaganda and public diplomacy campaign seeking to shape world opinion in support of an outcome favorable to the Kremlin. Despite the differences between Vladimir Putin and his Soviet counterparts of the 1950s and 1960s, strategic communications from Moscow will continue to target geo-political objectives and should be viewed alongside Russian actions in both current and historic contexts.

## **C. IDEOLOGY AND THE SPECTRUM OF VIOLENCE**

It is only fitting that two seemingly incongruous ideologies are, to some degree, both compatible with a strategy for a war based on ideas while at the same time constantly under the shadow of the ultimate weapon. One factor allowing this was that the perceived sacrifice people were being asked to make was minimized by an exaggerated faith, cultivated by strategic leaders, in the promise of new technology. This

concept will be discussed further below. Another explanation can be found in Clausewitz to the extent that this theorist understood best the relationship among the factors of war in fact, anger, hatred, political effect and reason.

The idea of influencing the emotional aspect of a nation strikes most clearly on one aspect of Clausewitz's much discussed remarkable trinity which is found at the end of the first chapter of the first book of *On War*. Although typically distilled to be the people, the military, and the government, links made explicitly by Clausewitz, one should still note his original reference to the trinity:

As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity- composed of primordial violence, hatred and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play and chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.<sup>215</sup>

Propaganda and public diplomacy clearly appeal to the emotional aspect of the trinity, the people, however these tools do not do so exclusively. Both the Soviet Peace Offensive and the NATO communiqués were produced by the government with the goal of mass persuasion in mind. The majority of the television programs examined came from the military. In the case of the Soviet and U.S. information campaigns, the people were the target but also the source of military energy in the epoch of total war, all machines notwithstanding. The NATO communiqués on the other hand, were directed at both citizens and government leaders. Furthermore, in democratic societies the citizenship plays an important role in shaping the actions of the other two aspects of the Trinity. Essentially propaganda cannot be isolated as a method to invoke an emotional response and pander solely to the “primordial violence” noted above, because the influence of the masses cannot be isolated to a single pillar of the trinity.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Indexed Edition, translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 89.

<sup>216</sup> Edward J. Villacres and Christopher Bassford, “Reclaiming the Clausewitzian Trinity,” *Parameters* (1995), 9-19.  
<http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/articles/1995/1995%20villacres%20and%20-bassford.pdf>



On any measureable continuum of conflict, at one end lies total and absolute war, in which goals of annihilation of the enemy reign supreme, and at the other extreme is political struggle without violence.<sup>217</sup> The spectrum of violence, outlined in the highest echelon of U.S. military doctrine, Joint Publication One (JP-1), has its roots in Clausewitz and the experience of the U.S. armed forces with the problem of limited and irregular conflict in contrast to total war and a strategy of annihilation. The theorist astutely noted: “War is a pulsation of violence, variable in strength and therefore variable in the speed with which it explodes and discharges its energy.”<sup>218</sup> The levels of war in JP-1 attempt to quantify these pulsations. Furthermore, perceptions of war also influence the level of violence, and vice-versa. Again Clausewitz offers further explanation:

The more powerful and inspiring the motives for war, the more they affect the belligerent nations and the fiercer the tensions that precede the outbreak, the closer will war approach its abstract concept, the more important will be the destruction of the enemy, the more closely will the military aims and the political objects of war coincide, and the more military and less political will war appear to be. On the other hand, the less intense the motives, the less will the military element’s natural tendency to violence coincide with political directives. As a result, war will be driven further from its natural course, the political object will be more and more at variance with the aim of ideal war, and the conflict will seem increasingly *political* in character.<sup>219</sup>

The ideological struggle of the Cold War inflamed the passions of citizens in the United States to vilify the Soviet menace and the military prepared to wage and win a conflict engulfed in unprecedented violence, yet on the other hand neither party desired to enter into war in its natural state nor was it practical policy to annihilate the USSR in a manner which would have invited the nuclear destruction of the United States in turn.

The importance of public diplomacy, propaganda, psychological warfare, or any other term associated with the utilization of ideas as weapons plays a changing role as one travels along this spectrum of violence. One perspective places the importance of

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<sup>217</sup> *Joint Publication 1* (JP-1), Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States (Department of Defense: Washington DC, 25 March 2013), I-14. [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp1.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1.pdf).

<sup>218</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 87.

<sup>219</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 87-88.

such tools as inverse to the level of violence present in conflict. Colonel William Darby, while discussing the role of Information Operations (IO) from a pseudo Clausewitzian perspective, saw the emergence of a pattern in this relationship:

Conflicts grouped near the total war extreme are uniformly kinetic operations clearly claiming the dominant/supported role in relation to IO. However, conflicts grouped toward the devoid-of-violence extreme appear to have an equally legitimate claim on being the dominant/supported activity according to the internal logic of their own particular circumstances and place on the continuum of political conflict.<sup>220</sup>

The examples presented in the previous chapters demonstrate a unique characteristic of Cold War as a primarily political struggle, but the potential violence of thermonuclear warfare was ever-present in mass persuasion and psychological warfare.

#### **D. TECHNOLOGY OR STRATEGY: CHALLENGES IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF WARFARE**

The threat of thermonuclear war in 1950s and 1960s was accompanied by a narrative focused on preparing citizens for the horrors of thermonuclear war. At the same time, nuclear deterrence developed as a concept based on war avoidance. The disconnect between war in reality and war in theory, and the preference, the striving, and the hope, for cleaner victory without the loss of life came to dominate strategy. This dichotomy arose from strategic culture, i.e. the US fascination with technology as a neutralization in the sense of Carl Schmitt, as well as some more or less coherent attempt to give a purpose to violence that had exceeded coherent political ends. At the center of such thought has been an over-reliance on technology and, in some instances, a substitution of technology for strategy and a lack of historical context or for the reasons outlined above that arise from domestic politics, culture, and ideas. The oft-repeated theme in episodes of *The Big Picture* was the technological marvel and superiority of the U.S. military which reflected

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<sup>220</sup> Colonel William Darby, USA, "Clausewitz's Theory of War and Information Operations," *Ideas as Weapons: Influence and Perception in Modern Warfare*, eds. G.J. David, Jr. and T.R. McKeldin III (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2009), 111-121, 118-9.

the experience of the second world war in part, where, the U.S. side had really not been as technologically superior as it had wanted, but caught up nonetheless and had the ultimate weapon of the A bomb.

Implicit in such praise is the suggestion that technology the solution to all military challenges as well as the technocratic negation of the inherent political and violent nature of war which, at times, is too awful for the liberal conscience to confront. Currently, in the year 2014 as this thesis is being written, drones and “cyberwarriors” are emerging technologies that adherents of the technological imperative in war- believe present a relatively cheap way to fight war and render it a coherent instrument of policy and to reduce the blood and mess that are, always and forever, at its core. However, in reality these are merely means for shaping the execution of war. Neo Clausewitzian Hugh Strachan notes that “the conditioning influences in shaping strategy,” in alignment with traditional thought on warfare, “have been less technological and more social, political and historical.”<sup>221</sup> These technologies are minor in their impact when compared to the technology of the atomic bomb and, more importantly have the same shortcomings as a solution to military problems as had by the bomb in the far off mid-20th century. Bernard Brodie, a further adherent of Clausewitz astutely noted that the atom bomb was no substitute for policy, and his observation remains valid to temper contemporary technological leaps of faith: “It underlines the urgency of our reaching correct decisions, but it does not help us to discover which decisions are in fact correct.”<sup>222</sup>

Determining a coherent strategy and policy in a democratic state and society is a unique challenge for the emotions of the population must both be reflected in the policy and checked to support often hard to define long term interests. In the high Atomic Age ca 1958, the messages presented to the public were, equally, if not more, important than the actual technology used to implement strategy, and often “The difference between

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<sup>221</sup> Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 167.

<sup>222</sup> Bernard Brodie quoted in *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective*, Hew Strachan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 192.

expert opinions and popular rhetoric was not always very great.”<sup>223</sup> The image of children ducking beneath school desks at a moment’s notice, the modern troops in *The Big Picture* prepared to fight in the aftermath of nuclear artillery blasts, bodacious atmospheric testing, and Secretary General Spaak’s memorable decree about choosing sputnik and the washing machine all serve as examples of efforts to shape the emotions of the masses in the shadow of the bomb and further embodied the best efforts of the liberal conscience in a period of crisis to master the ends and means of war without the latter suffocating everything as it threatened to do on an hourly basis.

These efforts should not be regarded by critics as attempts by “glorifiers of violence”<sup>224</sup> to manipulate populations. Rather the propaganda and portrayal of nuclear war to the masses demonstrate a quality intrinsic in the Cold War in which “numbers and capabilities of weapons were important, but not nearly as important as the fears and hopes that existed in people’s minds.”<sup>225</sup> That is, to say, a recognition by strategists of the role of anger, hatred, political purpose, chance, and the people in war in fact, versus the partisan political misuse of false martial virtues and technological obsession as a substitute for strategy by tacticians and militarists. This idea must not be relegated to the Cold War as it is more or less timeless. Although the specific objects of peoples’ hopes and fears differ in contemporary society from those of the Cold War West, it is the emotions and perceptions of the friend-foe dynamic from which violence and warfare arise. In order to gain a greater understanding of the nature of war, one would be remiss to overlook the narrative presented to the masses and the importance of citizens’ perceptions of warfare and those who must bear its awful but necessary burdens.

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<sup>223</sup> Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience*, 126.

<sup>224</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt Inc., 1969), 75.

<sup>225</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 235.

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